

May 9, 2023

NOAA Publishes Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Funding Aquaculture Projects



NOAA Sea Grant and NOAA Fisheries Office of Aquaculture are pleased to announce the publication of an agency-wide [Programmatic Environmental Assessment](#) that analyzes the potential impacts on the natural and human environment from aquaculture research and development projects funded by federal financial assistance awards.

"A key component of Sea Grant and NOAA's work is developing the latest aquaculture science to support coastal communities," said Jonathan Pennock,

director of NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program. "This collaboratively developed strategy will strengthen NOAA's efforts to ensure environmental compliance for such aquaculture research activities."

This Programmatic Environmental Assessment furthers NOAA's compliance with mandates from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, which requires that federal agency decision-makers use all practicable means to create and maintain conditions under which people and nature can exist in productive harmony.

The document serves as a planning tool to support tiered, site-specific analyses by narrowing the spectrum of environmental impacts to focus on project-level reviews as needed. As future aquaculture research and development projects are being proposed for federal financial assistance awards, if the proposed activities and potential impacts are considered and analyzed in the PEA, then no further NEPA analysis is necessary. The final document incorporated responses to public comments received in late 2022.

Aquaculture research and development federal awards support the development of scientific knowledge and a trained workforce to address critical issues including: supporting a healthy coastal economy; addressing the demand for domestic seafood products; and enhancing wild stock populations (for commercial purposes). The federal financial assistance award programs described provide a unique opportunity within NOAA to partner with external researchers and institutions, engage in private sector and public collaborations, and facilitate aquaculture research and development to meet these needs. These actions support innovative and sustainable approaches to aquaculture that will benefit NOAA's trust resources, the aquaculture industry, and the American public.

[Learn more about the Programmatic Environmental Assessment and Sea Grant's environmental compliance](#)

[Learn more about Sea Grant's work in aquaculture](#)

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