



September 25, 2018

The Honorable Paul Gosar  
Chairman, Congressional Western Caucus  
United States House of Representatives  
2057 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Gosar:

The Hawaii Aquaculture and Aquaponics Association (HAAA) strongly supports the package of nine bills filed in the House of Representatives to create needed changes to the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The HAAA is a Hawaii producer-based non-profit association that supports the establishment of legislation and programs that further the common interest of our membership and aquaculture community. For over 20 years, the HAAA has been the united voice of the Hawaii aquaculture sector committed to the growth of our industry, working with state and federal governments, the National Aquaculture Association (NAA), and others throughout the nation to create a business climate conducive to our industry's success, while fostering cost effective environmental stewardship and sustainability.

We recognize the positive intent of the ESA. However, since the Act was signed into law, substantial improvements to the science and technology used to farm aquatic animals has occurred. These developments have resulted in the ability to intensify production of aquatic species while using a reduced environmental footprint. Much of this increased productivity is the result of technological improvements to the farm environment and domestication of targeted aquatic species.

The focus of the ESA on new species listings, wherever they may occur in farm environments, severely hampers the opportunity for the aquafarming community to reduce market pressure on at-risk, wild species. We now can satisfy market demand with regulated, competitive farmed products that eliminate the incentive to over-harvest or illegally harvest wild species. Unfortunately, advances in animal husbandry and on-farm production are not currently recognized as valuable species conservation tools.

We respectfully ask that you consider how this limitation could be addressed. For these reasons, and the constructive, common-sense initiatives proposed in the legislation, we join the NAA and others in support of the Western Congressional Western Caucus's ESA modernization package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald P. Weidenbach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ronald P. Weidenbach, President