

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9802

To require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish an assessment program for commercial-scale offshore aquaculture through demonstration projects, to support aquaculture development, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 21, 2026

Mr. EZELL (for himself, Mr. PANETTA, Mr. SCHMIDT, Mr. CASE, Ms. TOKUDA, and Ms. PINGREE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish an assessment program for commercial-scale offshore aquaculture through demonstration projects, to support aquaculture development, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Marine Aquaculture Research for America Act of 2026”
6 or the “MARA Act of 2026”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 2 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
 Sec. 2. Purposes.
 Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE

Sec. 101. Office of Aquaculture.

TITLE II—COMMERCIAL-SCALE DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Sec. 201. Assessment program for offshore aquaculture.
 Sec. 202. Permits for demonstration projects for offshore aquaculture facilities.
 Sec. 203. Coordination of permit reviews for demonstration projects.
 Sec. 204. Reporting by assessment program participants.
 Sec. 205. Rule of construction; savings provisions.

TITLE III—SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY

Sec. 301. General support for industry.

TITLE IV—STUDIES AND REPORTS

Sec. 401. Study on offshore aquaculture by Ocean Studies Board of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.
 Sec. 402. Report on offshore aquaculture by Government Accountability Office.

3 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

4 The purposes of this Act are—

- 5 (1) to authorize the National Oceanic and At-
 6 mospheric Administration to establish and study
 7 commercial-scale demonstration projects to answer
 8 scientific questions needed to safely and sustainably
 9 regulate offshore aquaculture in the United States;
- 10 (2) to commission a study and report to assess
 11 the environmental and regulatory viability of a
 12 United States offshore aquaculture industry;
- 13 (3) to support aquaculture workforce develop-
 14 ment and working waterfronts by creating new jobs

1 and to support existing jobs and businesses within
2 the seafood industry of the United States, including
3 jobs and businesses for traditional participants in
4 the fishing industry;

5 (4) to reduce the United States seafood trade
6 deficit by expanding the domestic supply of seafood
7 through the production of sustainable offshore aqua-
8 culture; and

9 (5) to support the development of offshore
10 aquaculture in a manner that minimizes conflicts
11 with existing recreational and commercial fishing ac-
12 cess and uses.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
16 tion” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
17 Administration.

18 (2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
19 trator” means the Administrator of the Administra-
20 tion.

21 (3) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
22 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
23 gress” means—

24 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
25 and Transportation, the Committee on Environ-

ment and Public Works, and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Natural Resources, the Committee on Agriculture, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives.

(4) AQUACULTURE.—The term “aquaculture”—

(A) means any activity involved in the propagation, rearing, or attempted propagation or rearing, of cultured species, including the capture of wild individuals for rearing as broodstock; and

(B) does not include the practice of—

(i) capturing juvenile finfish to rear to maturity in an aquaculture facility for subsequent commercial sale, commonly referred to as ranching; or

(ii) rearing and releasing cultured species for the purpose of enhancing wild populations.

(5) AQUACULTURE STAKEHOLDER.—The term “aquaculture stakeholder” means—

1 (A) an owner or operator of an offshore
2 aquaculture facility or a land or coastal-based
3 facility supporting offshore operation, including
4 hatcheries and nurseries;

5 (B) a Regional Fishery Management Coun-
6 cil established under section 302(a) of the Mag-
7 nuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Man-
8 agement Act (16 U.S.C. 1852(a));

9 (C) an interstate fisheries commission;

10 (D) a conservation organization;

11 (E) a fisheries association;

12 (F) a State or county government;

13 (G) an Indian Tribe;

14 (H) a Native Hawaiian organization;

15 (I) a Native Hawaiian community;

16 (J) a Tribal or Indigenous community;

17 (K) a Federal or State agency with inter-
18 ests in aquaculture; or

19 (L) any other interested party.

20 (6) COASTAL STATE.—The term “coastal
21 State” has the meaning given the term “coastal
22 state” in section 304(4) of the Coastal Zone Man-
23 agement Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1453(4)).

24 (7) CULTURED SPECIES.—The term “cultured
25 species”—

1 (A) means any species propagated and
 2 reared for marine aquaculture;

3 (B) includes marine shellfish species in-
 4 tended for propagation that self-recruit to aqua-
 5 culture structures in the offshore environment;
 6 and

7 (C) excludes any member of the class Aves,
 8 Reptilia, or Mammalia.

9 (8) ESCAPE.—The term “escape” means the es-
 10 cape of juvenile- or adult-farmed organisms or fer-
 11 tilized eggs spawned by cultured species from off-
 12 shore aquaculture facilities or land or coastal-based
 13 hatcheries, nurseries, or associated facilities.

14 (9) EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—Unless otherwise speci-
 16 fied by the President in the public interest in
 17 a writing published in the Federal Register, the
 18 term “exclusive economic zone” means a zone,
 19 the outer boundary of which—

20 (i) except as provided by clause (ii), is
 21 200 nautical miles from the baseline from
 22 which the breadth of the territorial sea is
 23 measured; or

24 (ii)(I) if an applicable maritime
 25 boundary treaty is in force or is being pro-

visionally applied by the United States, is established by that treaty; or

(II) in the absence of such a treaty and in a case in which the distance between the United States and another country is less than 400 nautical miles, is a line equidistant between the United States and the other country.

(B) INNER BOUNDARY.—Without affecting any Presidential proclamation with regard to the establishment of the United States territorial sea or exclusive economic zone, the inner boundary of the exclusive economic zone is—

(i) in the case of the coastal States, a line coterminous with the seaward boundary of each such State, as described in section 4 of the Submerged Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1312);

(ii) in the case of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a line 9 nautical miles from the coastline of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

(iii) in the case of American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, or Guam, a line 3 geographic miles from the coast-

lines of American Samoa, the United States Virgin Islands, or Guam, respectively; or

(iv) in the case of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—

(I) the coastline of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, until the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands is granted authority by the United States to regulate all fishing to a line seaward of its coastline; and

(II) upon the United States grant of such authority, the line established by such grant of authority.

(C) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this paragraph may be construed to diminish the authority of the Department of Defense, the Department of the Interior, or any other Federal agency.

(10) FISHERY STAKEHOLDERS.—The term “fishery stakeholders” means—

(A) subsistence fishery participants and their dependents;

(B) commercial fishermen;

1 (C) seafood processing and distribution
2 workers;

3 (D) recreational fishery participants;

4 (E) Tribal fisheries; and

5 (F) territorial fishing communities, includ-
6 ing such communities in Hawaii, American
7 Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the
8 Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and
9 the United States Virgin Islands.

10 (11) GENETICALLY MODIFIED ORGANISM; GE-
11 NETICALLY MODIFIED.—The terms “genetically
12 modified organism” and “genetically modified”
13 mean any organism whose genetic material (DNA)
14 has been altered using technology in a way that does
15 not occur naturally by conventional breeding or nat-
16 ural processes and results in permanent, heritable
17 changes, with the exception of sterilization.

18 (12) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”
19 has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the
20 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
21 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

22 (13) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—
23 The term “institution of higher education” has the
24 meaning given that term in section 201 of the High-
25 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

1 (14) NATIVE HAWAIIAN COMMUNITY.—The
2 term “Native Hawaiian community” means the dis-
3 tinct Native Hawaiian indigenous political commu-
4 nity that Congress, exercising its plenary power over
5 Native American affairs, has recognized and with
6 which Congress has implemented a special political
7 and trust relationship.

8 (15) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The
9 term “Native Hawaiian organization” has the mean-
10 ing given that term in section 6207 of the Elemen-
11 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
12 U.S.C. 7517) and includes the Department of Ha-
13 waiian Home Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Af-
14 fairs.

15 (16) NATIONAL SEA GRANT COLLEGE PRO-
16 GRAM.—The term “national sea grant college pro-
17 gram” means the program maintained under section
18 204(a) of the National Sea Grant College Program
19 Act (33 U.S.C. 1123(a)).

20 (17) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE.—The term
21 “offshore aquaculture” means aquaculture con-
22 ducted in the exclusive economic zone.

23 (18) OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE FACILITY.—The
24 term “offshore aquaculture facility” means—

1 (A) an installation or structure used, in
2 whole or in part, for offshore aquaculture; or

3 (B) an area of the seabed or water column
4 used for offshore aquaculture.

5 (19) STATE.—The term “State” means each of
6 the several States, the District of Columbia, the
7 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, American Samoa,
8 the Virgin Islands, Guam, and any other Common-
9 wealth, territory, or possession of the United States.

10 (20) TRIBAL LAND.—The term “Tribal land”
11 means land that is subject to the jurisdiction of an
12 Indian Tribe.

13 (21) TRIBAL OR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY.—
14 The term “Tribal or Indigenous community” means
15 a population of people who are—

16 (A) enrolled members of an Indian Tribe;

17 (B) members of an Alaska Native or Na-
18 tive Hawaiian community or organization; or

19 (C) members of any other community of
20 Indigenous people located in a State.

21 **TITLE I—OFFICE OF**
22 **AQUACULTURE**

23 **SEC. 101. OFFICE OF AQUACULTURE.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within
25 the headquarters of the National Marine Fisheries Service

1 of the Administration the Office of Aquaculture (in this
2 section referred to as the “Office”).

3 (b) RESOURCES.—The Administrator shall ensure
4 the Office is provided with sufficient resources to carry
5 out the duties of the Office under subsection (d), subject
6 to available appropriations.

7 (c) REPRESENTATION AT REGIONAL FISHERIES OF-
8 FICES.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall pro-
10 vide for representation of the Office in each of the
11 regional fisheries offices of the Administration.

12 (2) MINIMUM PRESENCE.—In carrying out
13 paragraph (1), the Administrator—

14 (A) shall provide for the placement of at
15 least one regional aquaculture coordinator from
16 the Office in each regional fisheries office;

17 (B) shall otherwise ensure that the rep-
18 resentation of the Office at a regional fisheries
19 office is, at a minimum, sufficient to permit the
20 Office to fulfill the duties of the Office under
21 subsection (d); and

22 (C) may increase that representation to the
23 extent warranted by the activity and interest of
24 aquaculture stakeholders in the region.

25 (d) DUTIES.—The Office shall—

1 (1) coordinate the implementation of this Act,
2 including administration of—

3 (A) the offshore aquaculture assessment
4 program established under section 201; and

5 (B) the issuance of permits under section
6 202;

7 (2) coordinate regulatory, scientific, outreach,
8 and international issues related to aquaculture with-
9 in the Administration;

10 (3) collaborate with and leverage existing ef-
11 forts by the Administrator—

12 (A) to conduct outreach, education, exten-
13 sion services, and training efforts for aqua-
14 culture and offshore aquaculture; and

15 (B) to engage with aquaculture stake-
16 holders and, periodically, convene conferences
17 or workshops for aquaculture stakeholders to
18 exchange information and ideas;

19 (4) develop recommendations for best manage-
20 ment practices for offshore aquaculture operations
21 that, at a minimum—

22 (A) encourage development of offshore
23 aquaculture in a manner that complies with en-
24 vironmental law;

1 (B) are based on the best scientific infor-
2 mation available;

3 (C) take into account traditional knowl-
4 edge of Tribal and Indigenous communities as
5 appropriate to the region;

6 (D) are adaptive to offshore aquaculture
7 developments, such as updates in technology
8 and different environmental conditions;

9 (E) prefer species that are native or his-
10 torically naturalized to the region;

11 (F) evaluate and, where appropriate, incor-
12 porate practices that reduce reliance on wild-
13 caught marine forage in aquaculture feeds, con-
14 sistent with best available science and the avail-
15 ability of sustainable alternatives; and

16 (G) prioritize the health of cultured spe-
17 cies;

18 (5) coordinate and conduct additional research
19 to support the development of sustainable offshore
20 aquaculture;

21 (6) administer support for industry under sec-
22 tion 301;

23 (7) administer the contract to conduct the
24 study described in section 401; and

1 (8) coordinate the engagement of the Adminis-
2 tration with the Comptroller General of the United
3 States as the Comptroller General prepares the re-
4 port required by section 402.

5 (e) AGREEMENTS WITH STATES.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of the Gov-
7 ernor of a coastal State, the Administrator may
8 enter into an agreement with the State to allow the
9 State, and aquaculture stakeholders in the State as
10 appropriate, to participate in activities authorized
11 under sections 201 and 203 and titles III and IV
12 with respect to aquaculture operations located in
13 State waters that—

14 (A) are directly exposed to open ocean con-
15 ditions; and

16 (B) possess oceanographic or bathymetric
17 characteristics substantially similar to offshore
18 waters of the exclusive economic zone.

19 (2) LIMITATION.—An agreement entered into
20 under this subsection shall not be construed to sub-
21 ject aquaculture operations in State waters to per-
22 mitting or regulatory requirements applicable exclu-
23 sively to offshore aquaculture in the exclusive eco-
24 nomic zone, unless expressly provided in such agree-
25 ment and authorized under applicable State law.

1 (3) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this
 2 subsection or in any agreement entered into under
 3 this subsection shall be construed to displace, super-
 4 sede, or diminish the authority of a coastal State to
 5 regulate aquaculture within its waters or the author-
 6 ity of the Administrator under otherwise applicable
 7 law.

8 (f) BUDGET REQUEST.—The Administrator shall in-
 9 clude, in the budget justification materials submitted to
 10 Congress in support of the budget of the President for
 11 a fiscal year pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United
 12 States Code, a request for funding for the Office as a sep-
 13 arate line item with the National Marine Fisheries Service.

14 **TITLE II—COMMERCIAL-SCALE** 15 **DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS**

16 **SEC. 201. ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR OFFSHORE AQUA-** 17 **CULTURE.**

18 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than
 19 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
 20 Administrator shall establish an assessment program (in
 21 this section referred to as the “assessment program”) with
 22 the objective of assessing the viability of offshore aqua-
 23 culture—

24 (1) in light of changing circumstances and ad-
 25 vances in technology; and

1 (2) using the best available science, information
2 from aquaculture stakeholders, and information de-
3 veloped from demonstration projects for which per-
4 mits are issued under section 202.

5 (b) ELEMENTS.—At a minimum, the assessment pro-
6 gram shall examine the following in order to determine
7 the viability of offshore aquaculture:

8 (1) The ability of different commercial-scale fa-
9 cility designs and operational methods—

10 (A) to survive various atmospheric and
11 ocean conditions, including high wind speeds or
12 high-energy ocean conditions associated with se-
13 vere weather, or tidal or tsunami activity, while
14 preventing, to the extent possible—

15 (i) escapes;

16 (ii) loss of or damage to infrastruc-
17 ture; or

18 (iii) wildlife entanglement resulting
19 from loss or damaged infrastructure;

20 (B) to prevent, to the extent possible, en-
21 tanglements of large whales, sea turtles, and
22 other species protected under—

23 (i) the Endangered Species Act of
24 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); and

1 (ii) the Marine Mammal Protection
2 Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.);

3 (C) to prevent, to the extent possible, ad-
4 verse impacts on the marine environment, in-
5 cluding impacts to habitat, water chemistry,
6 and wildlife; and

7 (D) to comply with the requirements of the
8 United States Coast Guard and United States
9 Army Corps of Engineers in preventing adverse
10 impacts on navigation and safety to existing
11 ocean users due to offshore aquaculture facili-
12 ties, including requirements for operations,
13 navigation, and transit associated with such fa-
14 cilities.

15 (2) The ability of different technologies to pro-
16 vide reliable and timely data on offshore aquaculture
17 facilities, including visual data and other relevant
18 data types, on a regular basis to enable the Adminis-
19 trator to monitor—

20 (A) the compliance of demonstration
21 projects for which permits are issued under sec-
22 tion 202 with the requirements under sub-
23 section (b) of such section;

24 (B) impacts on the marine environment;
25 and

1 (C) interference with existing uses of the
2 water bodies in which demonstration projects
3 for which permits are issued under section 202
4 are located.

5 (3) The relative risks, benefits, and costs of
6 various types of offshore aquaculture, including dif-
7 ferent cultured species, in different geographies and
8 under varying environmental conditions.

9 (c) REPORT REQUIRED.—Not later than 5 years
10 after the date on which the Administrator establishes the
11 assessment program, the Administrator shall publish,
12 make available to the public, and submit to the National
13 Academy of Sciences and the Comptroller General of the
14 United States, a report that includes the following:

15 (1) A description of each demonstration project
16 for which a permit is issued under section 202, in-
17 cluding documentation supporting the issuance of
18 the permit and summary of information submitted
19 to the Administrator for each demonstration project.

20 (2) A description of the progress made toward
21 meeting the objective described in subsection (a).

22 (d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
23 tion shall be construed to require the development of new
24 assessment frameworks where existing ecosystem-based
25 assessment tools of the Administrator, including Inte-

1 grated Ecosystem Assessments, are sufficient to meet the
2 requirements of the assessment program under this sec-
3 tion.

4 **SEC. 202. PERMITS FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS FOR**
5 **OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE FACILITIES.**

6 (a) ISSUANCE OF PERMITS.—After the Administrator
7 establishes the assessment program under section 201, the
8 Administrator shall issue permits for commercial-scale
9 demonstration projects for proposed offshore aquaculture
10 facilities in furtherance of the assessment program.

11 (b) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible for
12 the issuance of a permit under subsection (a), a dem-
13 onstration project is required to—

14 (1) advance the objective described in section
15 201(a);

16 (2) cultivate only native or historically natural-
17 ized species that pose a minimal threat of harm to
18 wildlife and the ecosystem in which the project is lo-
19 cated;

20 (3) ensure that there will be no intentional cul-
21 ture, propagation, or release of genetically modified
22 organisms if such organisms present a material risk
23 of harmful ecological, genetic, or disease impacts
24 that is greater than such risk associated with con-
25 ventional stock;

1 (4) incorporate design and operational practices
2 that minimize the risk of escape, adverse wildlife im-
3 pacts (including entanglement), adverse impacts to
4 navigation, and adverse pollution impacts;

5 (5) develop an escape response and infrastruc-
6 ture loss or damage plan that minimizes the impact
7 of any escapes or infrastructure loss or damage on
8 the marine environment, including wild populations
9 and fishery resources, and on other uses of the
10 water body in which the project is located;

11 (6) comply with all applicable requirements, in-
12 cluding—

13 (A) the Federal Water Pollution Control
14 Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.) (commonly re-
15 ferred to as the “Clean Water Act”);

16 (B) the Endangered Species Act of 1973
17 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

18 (C) the Marine Mammal Protection Act of
19 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.); and

20 (D) the National Environmental Policy Act
21 of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

22 (7) maximize compatibility with, and prevent or
23 minimize displacement of, existing uses and users of
24 the marine environment in the near vicinity of where
25 the project is located; and

1 (8) conform to best practices to minimize the
2 use of therapeutants and pharmaceuticals, including
3 antibiotics, and minimize the release of such sub-
4 stances into the environment.

5 (c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—A person that holds
6 a permit for a demonstration project issued under sub-
7 section (a) may conduct offshore aquaculture for commer-
8 cial sale consistent with this Act, including regulations
9 promulgated by the Administrator to carry out this Act.

10 (d) APPLICATIONS.—A person seeking a permit for
11 a demonstration project shall submit to the Administrator
12 an application that specifies—

13 (1) the proposed location of the offshore aqua-
14 culture facility and the location of on-shore facilities
15 used for propagation or rearing of cultured species,
16 such as hatcheries, nurseries, or research operations;

17 (2) the proposed type of aquaculture gear that
18 will be used at facilities described in paragraph (1);

19 (3) the cultured species to be propagated or
20 reared, or both, at the offshore aquaculture facility;

21 (4)(A) the source of eggs, larvae, or juvenile
22 cultured species that will be used in offshore aqua-
23 culture operations;

24 (B) an analysis of the likely ecosystem impacts
25 of such operations, such as the risk of escapes, ad-

1 verse wildlife impacts, risk of pollution, and spread
2 of pathogens; and

3 (C) the information upon which the analysis
4 was based;

5 (5) plans to respond to—

6 (A) a natural disaster;

7 (B) an escape;

8 (C) disease;

9 (D) loss or damage to infrastructure;

10 (E) entanglements; and

11 (F) other circumstances designated by the
12 Administrator; and

13 (6) such other design, construction, and oper-
14 ational information as the Administrator may re-
15 quire to ensure the integrity of the operations and
16 contingency planning.

17 (e) NOTICE, PUBLIC COMMENT, AND RECOMMENDA-
18 TIONS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
20 receiving an application under this section, the Ad-
21 ministrator shall—

22 (A) conduct a preliminary review to deter-
23 mine whether the application is complete and
24 complies with the requirements of this Act and
25 other applicable Federal law;

1 (B) for each application that the Adminis-
2 trator has determined is incomplete or does not
3 comply with the requirements of this Act and
4 other applicable Federal law, provide to the ap-
5 plicant a notice that specifies modifications to
6 the application and the opportunity for resub-
7 mission;

8 (C) for each complete application that the
9 Administrator has determined complies with the
10 requirements of this Act and other applicable
11 Federal law under subparagraph (A), publish in
12 the Federal Register, and provide to the Gov-
13 ernor or Tribal leader of each specially affected
14 coastal jurisdiction, the application; and

15 (D) for a period of 60 days, invite and
16 consider all public comments, and recommenda-
17 tions to modify the application or to deny the
18 permit from any Governor or Tribal leader of a
19 specially affected coastal jurisdiction designated
20 under this subsection, on applications for per-
21 mits described in subparagraph (C).

22 (2) SPECIALLY AFFECTED COASTAL JURISDIC-
23 TION.—In this subsection, the term “specially af-
24 fected coastal jurisdiction” means any coastal State
25 or Indian Tribe—

1 (A) the land, Tribal land, or waters of
2 which—

3 (i) are adjacent to the Federal waters
4 in which the project will be conducted; and

5 (ii) are used, or are scheduled to be
6 used, as a support base for the project;
7 and

8 (B) for which there is a reasonable prob-
9 ability of significant effect on uses of land,
10 Tribal land, or water from the project.

11 (3) DESIGNATION OF A SPECIALLY AFFECTED
12 COASTAL JURISDICTION.—The Administrator shall
13 establish a mechanism for identifying and desig-
14 nating, with respect to each application for a dem-
15 onstration project received under this section, the
16 adjacent specially affected coastal jurisdiction or ju-
17 risdictions.

18 (f) PRIORITY CONSIDERATION.—In considering ap-
19 plications for permits for demonstration projects under
20 this section, the Administrator shall give priority consider-
21 ation to applications for demonstration projects—

22 (1) owned or operated by applicants who can
23 demonstrate that the demonstration project will di-
24 rectly benefit individuals who are already partici-
25 pating in the agricultural, wild-caught fishery, or

1 aquaculture industries who have been negatively im-
2 pacted by the COVID–19 pandemic, natural disas-
3 ters, or major disasters declared under section 401
4 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-
5 gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170); or

6 (2) sited within an Aquaculture Opportunity
7 Area identified by the Secretary of Commerce in ac-
8 cordance with section 7 of Executive Order 13921
9 (16 U.S.C. 1801 note; relating to promoting Amer-
10 ican seafood competitiveness and economic growth).

11 (g) SOCIOECONOMIC DATA.—In considering applica-
12 tions for permits for demonstration projects under this
13 section, and to support the study described in section 401,
14 the report required by section 402, and the assessment
15 program established under section 201, the Administrator
16 shall collect quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic
17 data associated with the owner or operator of, and commu-
18 nities employed or otherwise affected by, each demonstra-
19 tion project.

20 (h) DECISIONS WITH RESPECT TO ISSUANCE, DE-
21 FERRAL, OR DENIAL.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
23 the conclusion of the period for public comments
24 under subsection (e) with respect to an application

1 for a permit for a demonstration project under this
2 section, the Administrator shall—

3 (A) issue the permit, if the Administrator
4 determines the application complies with the re-
5 quirements of this Act and other applicable law;

6 (B) if the Administrator determines that
7 the application does not comply with the re-
8 quirements of this Act and other applicable law,
9 or if the Administrator approves recommenda-
10 tions for modifications under subsection (e),
11 and the application can be modified to comply
12 with those requirements—

13 (i) defer the decision on the permit;

14 and

15 (ii) provide to the applicant a notice
16 that specifies modifications to the proposed
17 demonstration project needed for a permit
18 to be issued and a timeline for resubmis-
19 sion and additional agency review; or

20 (C) if the Administrator determines that
21 the application does not comply with the re-
22 quirements of this Act and other applicable law,
23 and that the application cannot be modified to
24 comply with such requirements, or if the Ad-
25 ministrator has approved a recommendation to

1 deny the permit under subsection (e), deny the
2 permit and provide a justification for the de-
3 nial.

4 (2) OTHER APPROVAL.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—An application for a
6 permit for a demonstration project under this
7 section shall be considered approved, as if a
8 permit for the application had been issued
9 under paragraph (1)(A), if—

10 (i) the Administrator has determined
11 under subsection (e)(1)(A) that the appli-
12 cation is complete and complies with the
13 requirements of this Act and all other ap-
14 plicable Federal law;

15 (ii) the period for public comments
16 under subsection (e)(1)(D) has ended;

17 (iii) no recommendation for modifying
18 the application or denying the permit has
19 been received under subsection (e)(1)(D);
20 and

21 (iv) the Administrator does not take
22 action under subparagraph (A), (B), or (C)
23 of paragraph (1) before the date that is 90
24 days after the conclusion of the period for

1 public comments under subsection
2 (e)(1)(D) with respect to the application.

3 (B) PROCESS.—The Administrator shall
4 establish a process for the approval of applica-
5 tions under this paragraph.

6 (i) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—A permit for a demonstra-
7 tion project issued under this section—

8 (1) shall be in effect during the 10-year period
9 beginning on the date on which the project begins
10 in-water operations; and

11 (2) may be renewed as provided by subsection
12 (j).

13 (j) RENEWAL.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may
15 renew a permit, that has not been revoked, for a
16 demonstration project issued under this section for
17 an additional 10-year period after the 10-year period
18 described in subsection (i)(1) if—

19 (A) the owner or operator of the project
20 submits to the Administrator a proposal for re-
21 newal of the permit by a date determined by
22 the Administrator; and

23 (B) the Administrator determines that the
24 permit, as modified by the proposal, remains in

1 compliance with the requirements described in
2 subsection (b)(1).

3 (2) NOTICE AND PUBLIC COMMENT.—The Ad-
4 ministrator shall—

5 (A) publish in the Federal Register a no-
6 tice summarizing each proposal received under
7 paragraph (1) with respect to the renewal of a
8 permit;

9 (B) invite public comments for a period of
10 not less than 60 days regarding each such pro-
11 posal; and

12 (C) consider such comments in deter-
13 mining whether to approve the renewal of the
14 permit.

15 (3) RENEWAL DETERMINATION.—Not later
16 than 90 days after the conclusion of the period for
17 public comments under subsection (e) with respect
18 to an application for a renewal permit for a dem-
19 onstration project under this section, the Adminis-
20 trator shall—

21 (A) issue the renewal permit, if the Admin-
22 istrator determines the application complies
23 with the requirements of this Act and other ap-
24 plicable law;

1 (B) if the Administrator determines that
2 the application does not comply with the re-
3 quirements described in subparagraph (A), and
4 the application can be modified to comply with
5 those requirements—

6 (i) defer the decision on the renewal
7 permit; and

8 (ii) provide to the applicant a notice
9 that specifies modifications to the proposed
10 demonstration project needed for a permit
11 to be issued and a timeline for resubmis-
12 sion and additional agency review; or

13 (C) if the Administrator determines that
14 the application does not comply with the re-
15 quirements described in subparagraph (A) and
16 that the application cannot be modified to com-
17 ply with such requirements, deny the permit
18 and provide a justification for the denial.

19 (k) AUTHORITY TO MODIFY OR TERMINATE PAR-
20 TICIPATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS AND ORDER
21 REMOVAL OF FACILITIES.—The Administrator may re-
22 quire modifications to a demonstration project for which
23 a permit is issued under this section, terminate such a
24 permit, or order the removal of an offshore aquaculture
25 facility authorized to operate under such a permit, if—

1 (1)(A) the project incurs an incident involving
2 a death or serious personal injury and the Adminis-
3 trator determines that negligence of the project op-
4 erator was the cause of or a contributing factor to
5 the incident;

6 (B) operation of the project results in take of
7 endangered species or marine mammals in excess of
8 take authorized pursuant to—

9 (i) the Endangered Species Act of 1973
10 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

11 (ii) the Marine Mammal Protection Act of
12 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.);

13 (C) the owner or operator of the project fails to
14 comply with all of the terms and conditions of—

15 (i) the permit; or

16 (ii) modifications required by the Adminis-
17 trator under this subsection; or

18 (D) the Administrator determines that oper-
19 ation of the demonstration project would be unsafe
20 or result in unacceptable negative impacts to—

21 (i) the marine environment;

22 (ii) nearby human communities; or

23 (iii) other users of the water body in which
24 the project is located; and

1 (2) before requiring a modification to the dem-
2 onstration project, terminating the permit, or order-
3 ing the removal of the offshore aquaculture facil-
4 ity—

5 (A) the Administrator provides a warning
6 notice to the owner or operator of the project;
7 and

8 (B) the owner or operator is given an op-
9 portunity to address the Administrator’s con-
10 cerns.

11 (l) COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT ACT REVIEW.—
12 The submission of an application for a permit for a dem-
13 onstration project under this section shall trigger the right
14 of review by a coastal State under the Coastal Zone Man-
15 agement Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.).

16 (m) FISHING ACCESS AND COORDINATION.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out this section,
18 the Administrator shall consider the effects of off-
19 shore aquaculture facilities on fishing access and op-
20 portunities in adjacent public waters and, to the
21 maximum extent practicable consistent with applica-
22 ble law, seek to minimize unnecessary adverse im-
23 pacts on fishing access and use.

24 (2) COORDINATION.—The Administrator shall
25 coordinate, as appropriate, with the Commandant of

1 the Coast Guard and other relevant Federal agencies
2 regarding navigational safety measures associated
3 with offshore aquaculture facilities authorized under
4 this section.

5 (3) ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD.—The Adminis-
6 trator shall include in the administrative record for
7 a permit issued under this section a description of
8 any known fishing access impacts and any measures
9 identified to avoid or minimize such impacts.

10 **SEC. 203. COORDINATION OF PERMIT REVIEWS FOR DEM-**
11 **ONSTRATION PROJECTS.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—

13 (1) LEAD AGENCY.—The Administration shall
14 serve as the lead Federal agency for purposes of pro-
15 viding information on Federal permitting require-
16 ments for demonstration projects under section 202.

17 (2) COORDINATION.—The Administrator shall
18 coordinate with the Secretary of the Interior, the
19 Secretary of Agriculture, the Administrator of the
20 Environmental Protection Agency, the Chief of the
21 Army Corps of Engineers, the Commissioner of the
22 Food and Drug Administration, and the head of the
23 department in which the Coast Guard is operating,
24 and any other agency the Administrator considers

1 appropriate to simplify the Federal permitting proc-
2 ess for demonstration projects under section 202.

3 (b) RELATION TO CURRENT LAW.—Nothing in this
4 section shall be construed in derogation of law in effect
5 on the date of enactment of this Act that is applicable
6 to offshore aquaculture operations, and the unified permit-
7 ting and review process established under this section shall
8 not affect the timelines or standards established under
9 other laws.

10 (c) UNIFIED PERMITTING AND REVIEW PROCESS.—
11 Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this
12 Act, the Secretaries of Commerce, Interior, Agriculture,
13 Health and Human Services, and the department in which
14 the Coast Guard is operating, the Administrator of the
15 Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chief of Engi-
16 neers shall, through the Secretary of Commerce, initiate,
17 subject to the requirements of subsection (a), a rule-
18 making for all permits administered by such agency heads
19 relating to demonstration projects under section 202 for
20 a unified process, public notice, and public comment for—

- 21 (1) initial issuance of permits;
22 (2) renewal of permits; and
23 (3) transfer of permits.

24 (d) INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS.—The Administrator
25 shall convene representatives of the Department of Agri-

1 culture, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army
2 Corps of Engineers, the Department in which the U.S.
3 Coast Guard is operating, and any other agency the Ad-
4 ministrator deems appropriate to provide prospective ap-
5 plicants for permits for demonstration projects under sec-
6 tion 202 an opportunity for informal consultation with
7 such agencies. Nothing in this subsection shall preclude
8 an applicant or a prospective applicant from contacting
9 Federal agencies directly.

10 (e) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.—To the extent al-
11 lowable under the National Environmental Policy Act of
12 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), any environmental analysis
13 or environmental impact statement required under that
14 Act for offshore aquaculture activities proposed to be car-
15 ried out under a demonstration project under section 202
16 shall be conducted through a single, consolidated environ-
17 mental review and the Administration, through the Office
18 of Aquaculture established by section 101, shall serve as
19 the lead Federal agency.

20 (f) COORDINATION OF PERMIT REVIEWS.—To the
21 extent practicable under this Act and all other applicable
22 laws, including regulations, Federal agencies with permit-
23 ting requirements applicable to offshore aquaculture ac-
24 tivities proposed to be carried out under a demonstration
25 project under section 202 shall coordinate their review

1 processes in order to provide a timely response to an appli-
2 cant not later than 240 days after the submission of the
3 application.

4 (g) MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTION ACT.—The con-
5 duct of offshore aquaculture shall be considered a commer-
6 cial fishing operation for purposes of the Marine Mammal
7 Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1362).

8 **SEC. 204. REPORTING BY ASSESSMENT PROGRAM PARTICI-**
9 **PANTS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
11 date on which a demonstration project for which a permit
12 is issued under section 202 commences, and annually
13 thereafter until the demonstration project terminates, the
14 owner or operator of the demonstration project shall sub-
15 mit to the Office, in accordance with guidance provided
16 by the Administrator the following:

17 (1) Production data.

18 (2) Information on interactions with wild spe-
19 cies, mitigation measures taken, and the results of
20 such interactions and measures.

21 (3) Information on technology and operational
22 practices used to measure and monitor—

23 (A) effluent;

24 (B) integrity of cage materials and other
25 gear; and

1 (C) health of the cultivated species.

2 (4) Information on environmental and eco-
3 system impacts.

4 (5) Information on feed sourcing, including an
5 estimate of the concentration of wild-caught marine
6 ingredients (fishmeal and fish oil) in a feed relative
7 to the original wild fish, the species and geographic
8 origin of such forage, any planned changes to feed
9 formulations, and any other relevant information.

10 (6) Data necessary for the Ocean Studies
11 Board of the National Academies of Sciences, Engi-
12 neering, and Medicine to complete the study de-
13 scribed in section 401.

14 (7) Owner, operator, and employee demographic
15 data and other relevant data as determined appro-
16 priate by the Administrator for purposes of assess-
17 ing—

18 (A) the direct benefits of the demonstra-
19 tion project to fishery and aquaculture stake-
20 holders; and

21 (B) the quantifiable economic and social
22 impacts of the demonstration project for nearby
23 coastal communities and any specially affected
24 coastal jurisdictions.

1 (8) Information on navigation and safety im-
2 pacts to existing ocean users.

3 (9) Such additional information as the Adminis-
4 trator requires to fulfill the goals and objectives of
5 the assessment program established under section
6 201.

7 (b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Administrator
8 shall, upon request, provide technical assistance to owners
9 and operators of demonstration projects for which permits
10 are issued under section 202 to comply with the reporting
11 requirements of this section.

12 (c) EMERGENCY REPORTING.—The Administrator
13 shall establish an emergency reporting process for each
14 owner or operator of a demonstration project for which
15 a permit is issued under section 202 to immediately report
16 suspected or known interactions between project facilities
17 or vessels and protected wild species.

18 (d) PRIVACY.—The Administrator shall ensure that
19 data provided under this section is maintained in a man-
20 ner that safeguards personally identifiable information
21 and confidential business information.

22 **SEC. 205. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION; SAVINGS PROVISIONS.**

23 (a) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—A permit for a
24 demonstration project issued under section 202 shall not

1 supersede or substitute for any other authorization re-
2 quired under Federal or State law.

3 (b) APPLICABILITY.—This title does not apply with
4 respect to applications for a permit in process on the date
5 of the enactment of this Act or permits that are in effect
6 on that date.

7 **TITLE III—SUPPORT FOR** 8 **INDUSTRY**

9 **SEC. 301. GENERAL SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRY.**

10 (a) MARKETING AND PROMOTION GRANTS.—The Ad-
11 ministrator, in consultation with private sector aqua-
12 culture stakeholders, shall support the sale and public per-
13 ception of cultured species domestically and internation-
14 ally through existing grant programs.

15 (b) REGIONAL NETWORKS.—The Administrator,
16 through each regional fisheries office of the Administra-
17 tion, shall organize a network of—

18 (1) regional experts and Federal agency con-
19 tacts, in coordination with relevant organizations, in-
20 cluding the national sea grant college program, the
21 Regional Aquaculture Centers of the Department of
22 Agriculture, institutions of higher education, and the
23 Cooperative Extension System of the Department of
24 Agriculture, to provide technical expertise and exten-
25 sion services for offshore aquaculture and informa-

1 tion on Federal permit requirements for offshore
2 aquaculture; and

3 (2) individuals and businesses interested in
4 aquaculture operations and products to facilitate
5 professional development, marketing, mentoring op-
6 portunities, and agency outreach and education on
7 aquaculture.

8 (c) AQUACULTURE DATABASE.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall es-
10 tablish and maintain an aquaculture database within
11 the Office of Aquaculture established by section 101.

12 (2) INCLUSIONS.—The database required by
13 paragraph (1) shall include information on research,
14 technologies, monitoring techniques, best practices,
15 and advisory board recommendations relating to
16 aquaculture and offshore aquaculture.

17 (3) SAFEGUARDING OF INFORMATION.—The
18 Administrator shall make the database required by
19 paragraph (1) available in a manner that safeguards
20 personally identifiable information and confidential
21 business information.

22 (4) PATENTS.—The inclusion of information in
23 the database required by paragraph (1) shall not be
24 considered to be publication for purposes of sub-

1 section (a) or (b) of section 102 of title 35, United
2 States Code.

3 (d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR OPERA-
4 TORS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, through
6 the Office of Aquaculture established by section 101
7 and the regional aquaculture coordinators described
8 in such section, shall organize a program in each re-
9 gional fisheries office of the Administration to pro-
10 vide technical assistance to operators of offshore
11 aquaculture facilities.

12 (2) TAILORING.—The programs required by
13 paragraph (1) shall be tailored to meet the unique
14 needs of each region.

15 (3) CONSULTATIONS.—Under each program re-
16 quired by paragraph (1), the regional aquaculture
17 coordinators described in section 101 may conduct
18 consultations with the operator of each offshore
19 aquaculture facility in the region concerned on a
20 regular basis—

21 (A) to assess the status of the operator's
22 business; and

23 (B) if appropriate, to identify available re-
24 sources to support the operator, such as re-

1 gional experts, university extension agents, and
2 grant opportunities.

3 **TITLE IV—STUDIES AND**
4 **REPORTS**

5 **SEC. 401. STUDY ON OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE BY OCEAN**
6 **STUDIES BOARD OF THE NATIONAL ACAD-**
7 **EMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND**
8 **MEDICINE.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall seek to
10 enter into a contract with the Ocean Studies Board of the
11 National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medi-
12 cine (in this section referred to as the “Board”) under
13 which the Board shall, not later than 5 years after the
14 date on which the Administrator establishes the assess-
15 ment program under section 201—

16 (1) complete a study to develop the scientific
17 basis for efficient and effective regulation of offshore
18 aquaculture; and

19 (2) submit to Congress and make publicly avail-
20 able the results of the study.

21 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study completed pursuant to
22 subsection (a) shall, with respect to offshore aqua-
23 culture—

24 (1) identify—

1 (A) optimal methods of operation of off-
2 shore aquaculture facilities to limit adverse ef-
3 fects on the environment, wildlife, and human
4 well-being, including—

5 (i) considerations to guide siting deci-
6 sions of such facilities;

7 (ii) appropriate stocking densities; and

8 (iii) opportunities for selective breed-
9 ing;

10 (B) a science-based definition of “respon-
11 sible offshore aquaculture feed or other inputs”,
12 including guidance on sourcing feed or other in-
13 puts to address long- or short-term concerns,
14 including the availability and scalability of such
15 inputs;

16 (C) potential adverse effects on the envi-
17 ronment, wildlife, and human well-being, includ-
18 ing from—

19 (i) the use of antibiotics and other
20 pharmaceuticals by offshore aquaculture
21 facilities, including through analyses nec-
22 essary to establish acceptable rates, impact
23 levels, and risk thresholds, such as anal-
24 yses of organism antibiotic consumption or

1 metabolization versus excretion to the sur-
2 rounding environment;

3 (ii) pollution originating from offshore
4 aquaculture facilities, including such effect
5 on marine organisms and the environment,
6 including the potential for assimilation;

7 (iii) abandoned, lost, damaged, or oth-
8 erwise discarded gear or equipment;

9 (iv) harmful interactions with wildlife;

10 (v) genetic mixing between cultured
11 species and wild marine species;

12 (vi) the transfer of disease between
13 cultured species and wild species;

14 (vii) the collection and removal of
15 brood stock for offshore aquaculture oper-
16 ations, and hatcheries and prestocking
17 rearing operations that are specific to off-
18 shore aquaculture;

19 (viii) large-scale cultivation of filter-
20 feeding bivalve organisms and seaweed;

21 (ix) offshore aquaculture facilities act-
22 ing as aggregating devices for wild fish-
23 eries and wildlife populations;

24 (x) predator control devices and meth-
25 ods; and

1 (xi) the use of non-sustainable sources
2 of feed or other inputs, including the use
3 of globally limited marine resources for
4 feed ingredients, and scalability of alter-
5 natives, including—

6 (I) novel ingredients (for exam-
7 ple, insect, single cell protein, and
8 algae);

9 (II) traditional ingredients (for
10 example, soya); and

11 (III) other inputs;

12 (D) potential methods and technologies to
13 mitigate adverse effects, including the effects
14 identified under subparagraph (C);

15 (E) potential methods to identify conflicts
16 between offshore aquaculture facilities and
17 other users of the offshore environment, and ru-
18 brics for developing solutions to mitigate such
19 conflicts;

20 (F) the types of quantitative data and
21 qualitative information necessary for the opti-
22 mal operation of offshore aquaculture facilities
23 and appropriate methods of procuring such
24 data and information, including from—

1 (i) citizen science (as defined in sec-
2 tion 402(c) of the Crowdsourcing and Cit-
3 izen Science Act (15 U.S.C. 3724(c)));

4 (ii) the traditional knowledge of Trib-
5 al and Indigenous communities; and

6 (iii) offshore aquaculture operators;

7 (G) best practices for offshore aquaculture
8 siting and operations to manage and plan for
9 predicted changes in global atmospheric and
10 oceanographic conditions;

11 (H) economic impacts and contributions of
12 offshore aquaculture to local, State, regional,
13 and national economies;

14 (I) the business profitability potential and
15 market opportunities for offshore aquaculture
16 enterprises; and

17 (J) potential benefits from offshore aqua-
18 culture operations at the local, State, and na-
19 tional levels, including social, cultural, eco-
20 nomic, and environmental ecosystem services;
21 and

22 (2) provide recommendations for legislative or
23 administrative action with respect to—

24 (A) methods of operation identified under
25 paragraph (1)(A);

1 (B) mitigating adverse effects identified
2 under paragraph (1)(C);

3 (C) environmental standards, control rules,
4 or reference points that build on the existing
5 public and private standards or best practices
6 for the sustainability of offshore aquaculture;
7 and

8 (D) ensuring that operators of offshore
9 aquaculture facilities adhere to international
10 standards for social responsibility, public
11 health, and equitable labor practices, including
12 with respect to sourcing inputs for such facili-
13 ties.

14 **SEC. 402. REPORT ON OFFSHORE AQUACULTURE BY GOV-**
15 **ERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after the
17 date on which the Administrator establishes the assess-
18 ment program under section 201, the Comptroller General
19 of the United States shall submit to the appropriate com-
20 mittees of Congress a report examining the permitting,
21 monitoring, and regulation of offshore aquaculture that
22 covers the 15-year period prior to the program’s establish-
23 ment and the time period since the program’s establish-
24 ment.

1 (b) BASES OF REPORT.—The Comptroller General
2 shall base the report required by subsection (a) on avail-
3 able literature, case studies, and aquaculture stakeholder
4 input.

5 (c) ELEMENTS OF REPORT.—The report required by
6 subsection (a) shall—

7 (1) assess the feasibility and potential positive
8 and negative implications of designating a lead agen-
9 cy to issue permits for offshore aquaculture oper-
10 ations in a timely manner;

11 (2) identify lessons learned during the period
12 described in subsection (a) with respect to—

13 (A) the effect of offshore aquaculture type,
14 location, and regulatory framework on the suc-
15 cess of offshore aquaculture projects;

16 (B) the degree of involvement of coastal or
17 adjacent States or Tribal or Indigenous commu-
18 nities in consultations for, planning for, or op-
19 erations of offshore aquaculture;

20 (C) safety protocols and risk mitigation
21 measures for the permitting and oversight proc-
22 esses for offshore aquaculture, including—

23 (i) escape prevention measures;

24 (ii) emergency event response plan-
25 ning;

1 (iii) compliance monitoring, particu-
2 larly in remote locations;

3 (iv) compliance with Federal laws;

4 (v) mechanisms for reporting to ap-
5 propriate Federal authorities; and

6 (vi) vessel navigation aids to ensure
7 navigational safety;

8 (D) the effect of incentives to reduce ad-
9 verse effects or disparate impacts from offshore
10 aquaculture operations;

11 (E) building and optimizing synergies be-
12 tween offshore aquaculture and wild-caught
13 fishing activities, or offshore, nearshore, and
14 onshore aquaculture activities, including market
15 development, increasing seafood consumption,
16 and shared infrastructure;

17 (F) the environmental effects of offshore
18 aquaculture operations, including mechanisms
19 to prevent harm to the environment, wildlife, or
20 human well-being;

21 (G) the net economic and social benefits of
22 offshore aquaculture projects, particularly for
23 nearby communities, specially affected coastal
24 jurisdictions as defined in section 202(e), and
25 aquaculture and fishery stakeholders, based on

1 project size, regulatory structures, and financ-
2 ing structures;

3 (H) the impact of introducing offshore
4 aquaculture products to the marketplace on
5 supply and demand for wild-capture fisheries
6 products, and methods for ensuring resiliency
7 and growth for both offshore aquaculture and
8 wild-capture fisheries products;

9 (I) mechanisms to enhance capital invest-
10 ment, workforce development, and equitable op-
11 portunity requirements or assistance programs
12 in the permitting process for offshore aqua-
13 culture, or to diversify permit applicants;

14 (J) outstanding needs for continued re-
15 search, development, education activities, pro-
16 grams, and funding regarding—

17 (i) offshore aquaculture projects; and

18 (ii) development of the domestic work-
19 force and entrepreneurship related to off-
20 shore aquaculture;

21 (K) the economic potential for both large-
22 and small-scale offshore aquaculture operations
23 to generate a positive return on investment
24 under various regulatory and financing struc-
25 tures;

1 (L) the applicability and sufficiency of ex-
2 isting regulatory systems for offshore aqua-
3 culture; and

4 (M) existing local, State, Federal, and for-
5 eign regulatory standards that may serve as
6 models for efficient and effective regulation of
7 offshore aquaculture; and

8 (3) include such recommendations as the Comp-
9 troller General may have with respect to future off-
10 shore aquaculture operations, including with respect
11 to—

12 (A) regulatory processes necessary for per-
13 mitting, monitoring, and oversight, including
14 processes and techniques related to siting, de-
15 ployment, operations, and decommissioning;

16 (B) potential safeguards, data collection,
17 or monitoring required to minimize disparate
18 impacts on specially affected coastal jurisdic-
19 tions (as defined in section 202(e)), fishery
20 stakeholders, local economies, marine environ-
21 ments, and existing domestic economic sectors;

22 (C) mechanisms for optimizing coordina-
23 tion among Federal agencies with a role in per-
24 mitting or supporting offshore aquaculture

1 without compromising the goals of such permit-
2 ting;

3 (D) methods for effectively involving aqua-
4 culture stakeholders, including—

5 (i) specially affected coastal jurisdic-
6 tions (as defined in section 202(e));

7 (ii) local communities;

8 (iii) regional offshore waters users
9 and management groups, including re-
10 gional fishery management councils; and

11 (iv) users of local, State, Tribal, and
12 Federal waters and coastal resources;

13 (E) best practices for incorporating local
14 knowledge, including from Tribal or Indigenous
15 communities;

16 (F) capabilities of Federal agencies that
17 are necessary for effective regulation of the off-
18 shore aquaculture sector; and

19 (G) how creating private rights of action or
20 waiving sovereign immunity would affect the de-
21 velopment of offshore aquaculture projects and
22 the acceptance of such projects by nearshore
23 and offshore waters user groups and coastal
24 communities.

○