

AOA: Southern California

Comments Open until Feb. 20

What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area (and what is it not)?

- ▶ NOAA's Office of Aquaculture developed the AOA process to assess domestic regions for potential future development of aquaculture production in federal waters.
- ▶ An AOA is a defined geographic area that has been evaluated to determine its potential suitability for commercial aquaculture. Data collected through scientific analysis and multiple phases of public engagement will help the agency identify areas within the AOA that may be environmentally, socially, and economically appropriate for commercial aquaculture.
- ▶ This process is NOT regulatory. It does not trigger permitting or alter the permitting process, nor does it authorize, implement or expand any aquaculture activities.
- ▶ However, the information gathered and formalized through this process may be incorporated into future permit



applications. Stakeholder input is vital to ensuring that the process is and continues to be based on robust data.

What is a Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement?

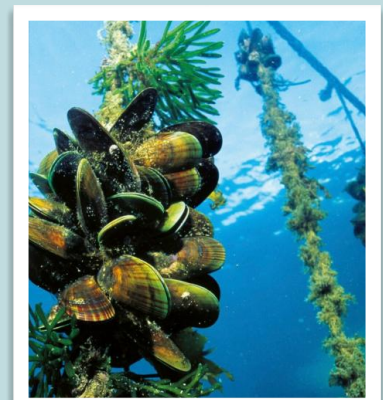
- ▶ A draft PEIS provides a full description of the affected environment as well as the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of identifying AOAs in the region.
- ▶ The draft is a requirement of the NEPA (the National Environmental Policy Act) process and is now open to public comment before it is formalized.

WHERE ARE WE IN THE PROCESS?

Information Gathering & Drafting | Request for public input; engagement with stakeholder groups and management; collection of siting data for regional Aquaculture Atlas; drafting Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Public Comment | Collection of feedback on draft PEIS through written and verbal comments.

Publication | Notice of Intent for formalized EIS.



PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Written | Comments can be submitted in writing via mail, email or at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) (see contact info below).

Virtual Listening Sessions*

January 23, 2025 from 1-3 p.m. Pacific Time

January 28, 2025 from 5-7 p.m. Pacific Time | [Registration](#)

**Session recordings will be linked here when available.*



Should I give feedback? YES!

If you:

Are a fisherman in this region

Work with fishermen

Buy, sell, distribute domestic seafood

Are a fishing community stakeholder

Your feedback can help strengthen local working waterfronts and community-based fisheries.

Robust working waterfronts are critical to our domestic seafood supply, which affects all of us, from fishermen to retailers and distributors, to consumers and community members.

Stakeholders looking to invest in aquaculture and mariculture may rely on your input on existing practices, resources and infrastructure in the permitting phase.

How will this information be used?

- ▶ To develop and expand regional recommendations for existing and potential marine resource production through aquaculture — within the areas identified.

What kind of feedback can you provide?

- ▶ The AOA process is new, so NOAA's Office of Aquaculture is learning about the region's infrastructure and marine industries while also adapting the process of information-gathering before publication.
- ▶ Local knowledge is key to defining and refining the information used to establish the parameters of the AOAs.
- ▶ Your input now could affect local and domestic fisheries and the seafood supply chain for years to come.

Who is most affected by the AOAs?

- ▶ All fishery participants and working waterfront communities in the region.
- ▶ This opportunity is particularly valuable for smaller-scale fisheries stakeholders who typically have less access to federal managers and policymakers.

1

COMMENT DEADLINE

Thursday,
February 20, 2025

2

SUBMIT ONLINE

[www.regulations.gov/
commenton/NOAA-
NMFS-2022-0051-0048](https://www.regulations.gov/commenton/NOAA-NMFS-2022-0051-0048)
Or via email
socalaoa.wcr@noaa.gov

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SUBMIT VIA MAIL

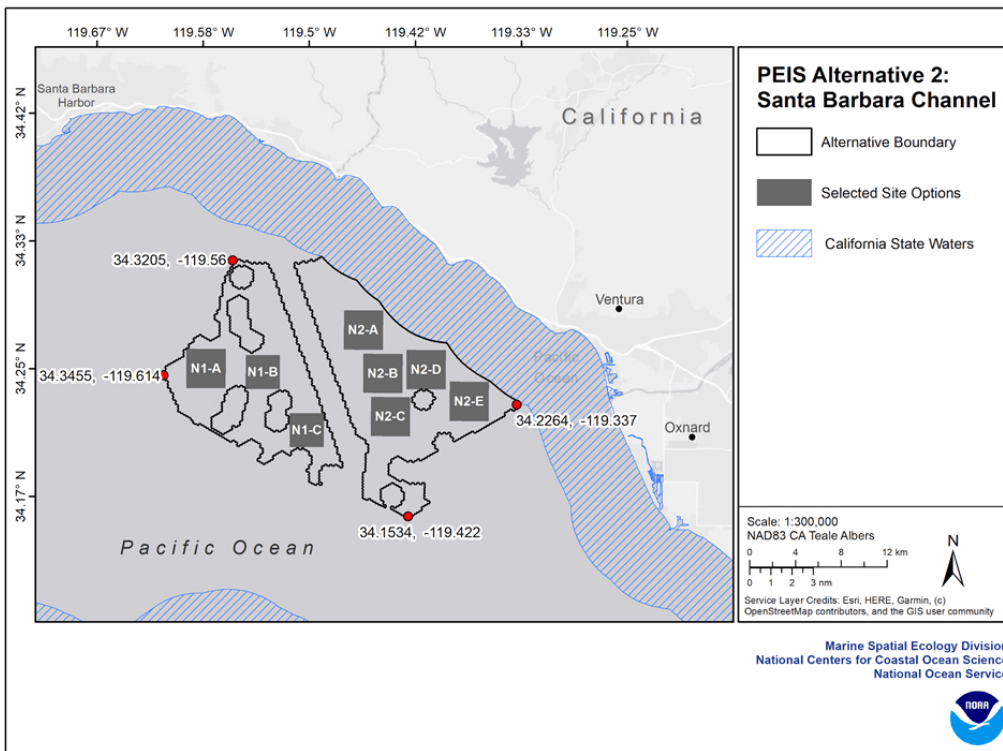
Celia Barroso
RAC-CA, NMFS West
501 W. Ocean Blvd.,
Ste. 4200
Long Beach, CA 90802

Key Proposals of the Draft PEIS

- ▶ This draft includes three Preferred Alternatives and one Non-Preferred Alternative.
- ▶ The first two Preferred Alternatives (2 and 3) analyze areas in the Santa Barbara Channel and Santa Monica Bay. The third (Alternative 4) combines these areas for analysis.
- ▶ Each Preferred Alternative also includes analysis of mariculture-only (seaweed/algae and shellfish) as well as all types of aquaculture for these areas. These analyses are listed as Sub-Alternatives.
- ▶ This draft also includes areas that were not considered for analysis and why they were excluded.
- ▶ The analysis in this document does not change the aquaculture permitting process, nor does it alter regulations of aquaculture in federal waters.

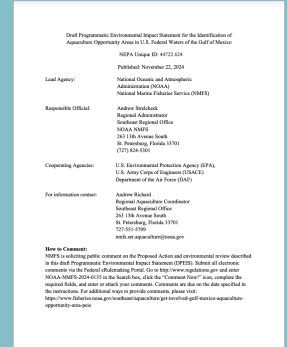
Alternatives

- ▶ **Alternative 1** (page 54) is no action: No recommendations on AOAs from NOAA.
- ▶ **Alternative 2** (page 55) would identify one to eight AOAs within federal waters offshore of Santa Barbara and Ventura counties in the Santa Barbara Channel. Total acreage evaluated: 15,000.

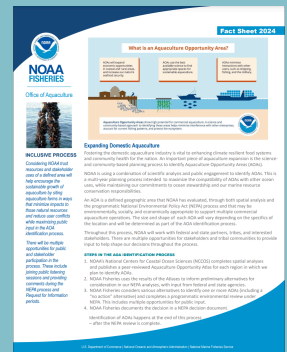


Key Documents

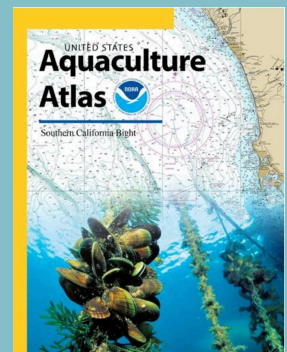
Draft PEIS



AOA Fact Sheet



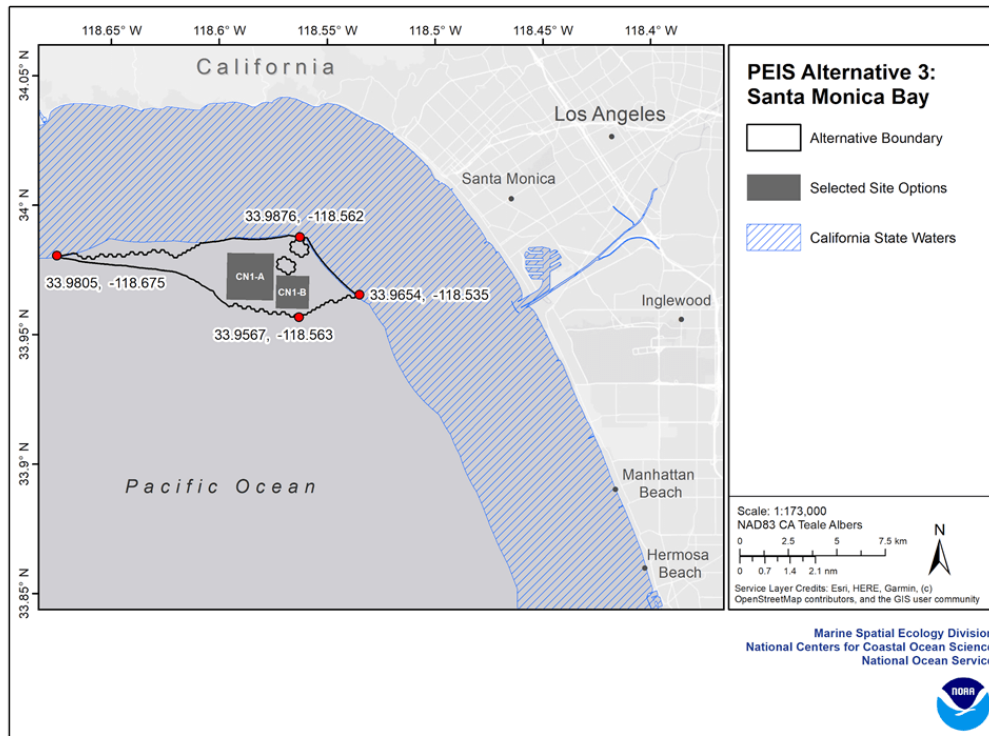
Regional Atlas



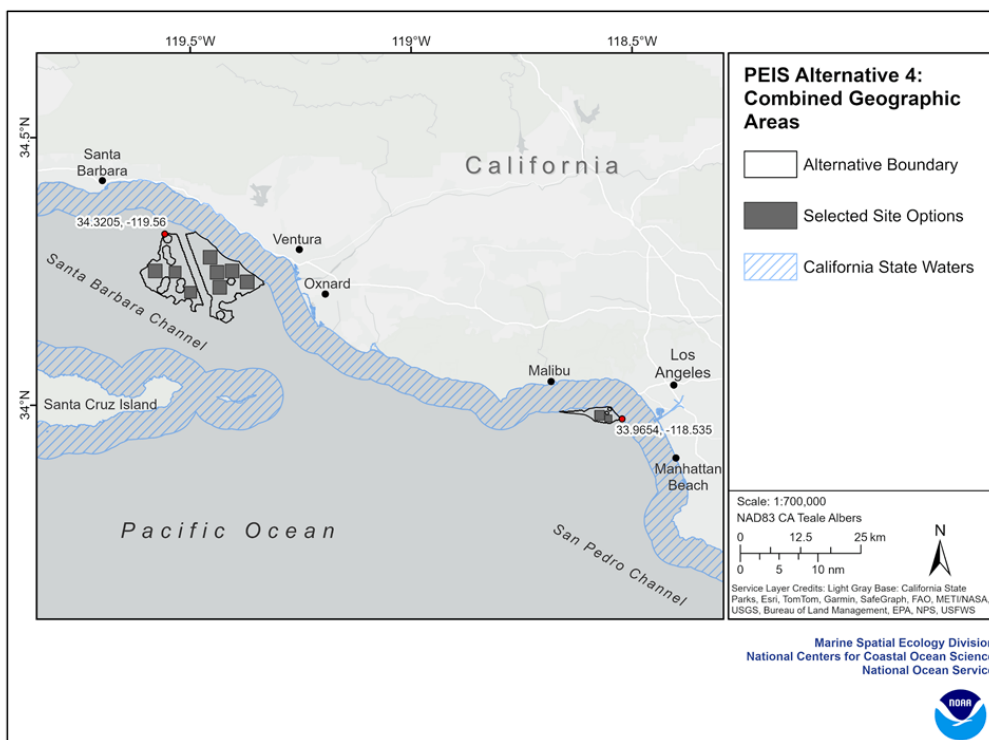
Scoping Report



- ▶ **Alternative 3** (page 59) would identify one to two AOAs within federal waters offshore of Los Angeles County in Santa Monica Bay. Total acreage evaluated: 1,500.



- ▶ **Alternative 4** (page 60) combines the geographic areas to identify up to 10 AOAs within the boundaries of either Alternative area, and a maximum area to be determined by NOAA Fisheries with public input from the current comment period.



AOA Timeline

May 7, 2020

President Trump signs Executive Order 13921, Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth.

May 2020

NMFS initiates public outreach to gather input from stakeholders.

October 2020

A Request for Information is published in the Federal Register, inviting public input on identifying AOAs in federal waters of the Gulf of Mexico and Southern California.

November 2021

NMFS publishes spatial modeling analysis: Aquaculture Atlas.

May 2022

NMFS publishes a Notice of Intent for this PEIS, opening a 60-day public comment period.

Nov. 22, 2024

NMFS begins a 90-day public comment period for the draft PEIS.

Feb. 20, 2025

The 90-day public comment period for the draft PEIS closes.

TBD in 2025

NMFS will analyze and respond to substantive public comments on the draft PEIS. If the decision is to proceed, NMFS will publish a final PEIS based on public input and the revised analysis.

- ▶ The agency has also considered two **Sub-Alternatives** for each of the Alternatives 2 through 4, analyzing the potential impacts of macroalgae and shellfish aquaculture only, as well as the potential impacts of all types of commercial aquaculture — including macroalgae, shellfish, finfish, and Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA).

Why Should You Comment?

- ▶ **Your Input Matters.** Your feedback is critical to ensure the analysis accurately reflects the potential impacts — both positive and negative — on your business, coastal community, and the seafood supply chain.
- ▶ **A Final Chance to Weigh In.** This is your last opportunity to formally contribute before the analysis is finalized.

Topics of Interest

- ▶ **Commercial fishing** starts on **168** and **389**
- ▶ **Seafood markets** starts on **182** and **392**
- ▶ **Fisheries gear calendar** starts on **359**

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Celia Barroso
RAC-CA, NMFS West
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Who We Are



Established in 2017. Our team of lifelong commercial fishing industry leaders is based in Alaska, Seattle, Montana and Maine, with a constant connection to Washington, DC.

Find our Fisheries, Aquaculture and Special Reports at OceanStrat.com



We specialize in American fisheries management, aquaculture policy and the seafood supply chain. We aim to connect diverse ocean stakeholders and influential leaders around today's most pressing fishery and seafood issues.

We are deeply connected by our fishing heritage. From early years as deckhands to launching our own fishing careers, our philosophy is rooted in respect for the marine ecosystem. Today, we lean on our friends and mentors in the industry to help us be better communicators, stewards and connectors for a strong seafood future.