



United Catcher Boats  
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Seattle, WA 98199

May 05, 2025

The Honorable Howard Lutnick  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

**RE: Urgent Request to Reconsider RIF at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)**

Dear Secretary Lutnick,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to reconsider any planned Reduction in Force (RIF) within the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The proposed cuts threaten to dismantle the very infrastructure necessary to implement the administration's Executive Order on Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness and would gravely impact the American seafood industry and coastal communities nationwide.

The seafood industry supports 1.2 million jobs and delivers over 10 billion healthy, sustainable meals to American families each year. Our continued success is directly tied to the foundational services provided by NMFS—services that are not luxuries, but essential public goods. These include:

- Science-based fishery stock assessments and surveys;
- Permitting and management systems that keep businesses operating;
- Observer and monitoring programs that ensure accountability;
- Weather and ocean forecasting that protect lives at sea;
- And the expert staffing that ties all of this work together.

A functioning, adequately funded NMFS is not only essential for effective fisheries management, but also for the safe and efficient operation of our commercial fleets. Without it, the sustainability, reliability, and global competitiveness of American seafood are at risk. We cannot execute the objectives of the Executive Order without these core capabilities in place.

We recognize the broader goals of government efficiency and responsible budgeting. However, slashing the capacity of NMFS undermines national priorities for domestic food security, job creation, and global trade competitiveness. Instead, we encourage you to explore targeted



efficiency improvements that preserve NMFS's mission-critical functions while meeting fiscal objectives.

Now more than ever, we need NOAA and NMFS operating at full strength to deliver on science, safety, and sustainability. I urge you to work with Congress to fully fund these core programs in FY26 and to halt any RIF activity that would weaken our national seafood infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Keikkala". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Andrea Keikkala  
Executive Director  
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The United Catcher Boats (UCB) is a nonprofit trade association representing trawl catcher vessel companies operating in the Bering Sea pollock & cod fishery, two of the most productive and valuable fisheries in the world. Headquartered in Seattle, UCB's member companies span Alaska, Washington, and Oregon and collectively contribute to over 35% of all U.S. commercial fish landings. UCB advocates for sustainable fisheries management, industry collaboration, and responsible fishing practices to ensure the long-term health of marine resources and the communities that depend on them.