

Sent: Fri 12/2/2011 3:35 PM
Subject: Comment - National Bioeconomy Blueprint

To: The Office of Science and Technology Policy of the United States

I wish to provide the following comment in response to the posted RFI - Building A 21st Century Bioeconomy:

A safe and sustainable supply of food and water is irrevocably one of the greatest bioeconomy challenges facing the world today. Global demands for high quality protein, scientific awareness of the health benefits associated with omega three fatty acids, and the status of depleted wild fish populations clearly indicate a need for increased food production from aquaculture. As shown by our national seafood deficit in excess of \$10 billion, the majority of which is obtained from Asia, the US clearly lags far behind international efforts aiming to increase seafood production. Not only would a major expansion of the US seafood industry boost our economy, it would also help ensure that food and water consumed by Americans is safe, nutritious, and produced by sustainable methods.

Focusing research and innovative technology towards sustainable food production can be accomplished by placing a higher directive, and making more resources available, to Land Grant Institutions and USDA specifically for purpose of sustainable seafood industry development. In order to effectively overcome this challenge, three principles of sustainability must be addressed: long term environmental sustainability, social acceptance, and long term economic benefit. Moving life science breakthroughs from lab to market requires a more programmed and planned effort to bring researchers, industry, and society together to work towards these common goals.

In closing, food and water are the two most critical issues facing societies around the globe. The reality of the situation is, that if we do not place a higher priority on sustainable and efficient agriculture practices under fair regulatory controls, then hunger, poverty and environmental stability will continue to worsen in a growing population.

Sincerely,

Chris Weeks, PhD
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Aquaculture Extension Specialist, North Central Region

---- Advocate for Sustainable Aquaculture Practices -----