

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 3, 2017

Chairman John Culberson  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member José Serrano  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,  
Science, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

As you develop the Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill, we urge your support for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Sea Grant College Program—a program critically important to shoreline states throughout the country.

Across the nation, thirty-three universities participate in the National Sea Grant Program—a federal-state partnership which provides critical services to a wide range of constituents in every coastal and Great Lakes state, and U.S. territories. Sea Grant contributes to making coastal communities more resilient while also aiding our aquaculture industries in navigating federal and state regulations. In this sense, Sea Grant serves as the coastal, marine-based equivalent of Agriculture Extension programs.

With imported seafood making up 90% of American seafood consumption, our nation should be focusing on programs to expand and improve our domestic aquaculture industry. Sea Grant is a program that does just that—helping fishermen and shellfish farmers navigate a complex patchwork of state and federal coastal zone management regulations through technical assistance. Sea Grant works with local producers to grow and sustain their business models while connecting them to local resources to share best practices.

The economic impact of the Sea Grant Program highlights the benefit of this federal investment. According to the 2016 performance metrics of the program, Sea Grant contributed to creating and sustaining 20,770 jobs and 2,903 businesses. On top of business and job creation, Sea Grant logged a staggering 265,602 volunteer hours in 2016. Further, the program contributed to \$575 million in economic impact—nearly half of our nation's \$1.2 billion aquaculture economy.

The National Sea Grant Program is a known job creator that is highly leveraged to maximize the effectiveness of federal investment. This program serves as the primary resource for our coastal

small businesses and fishing communities. We urge you to continue your support for this important program.

Sincerely,



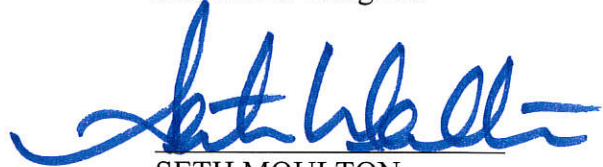
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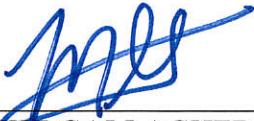
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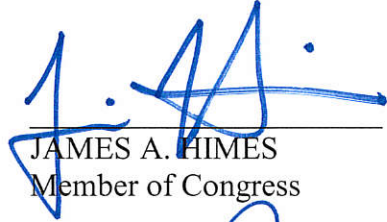
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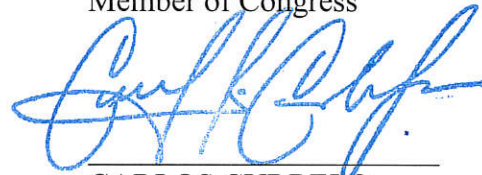
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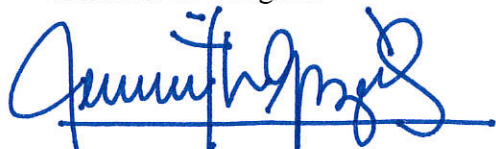
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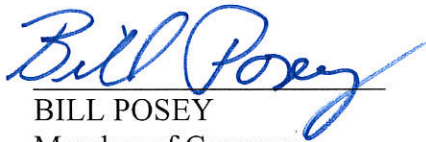
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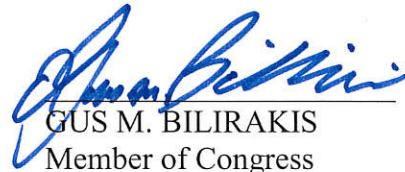
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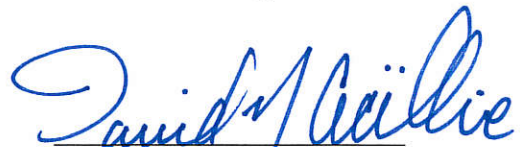
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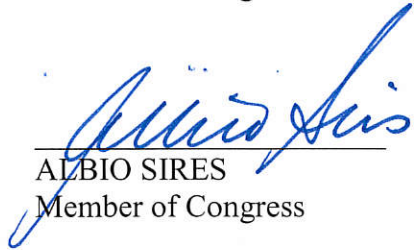
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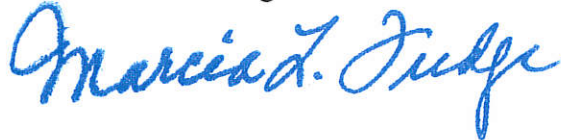
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