

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

September 18, 2026

The Honorable Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary of Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington D.C., 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

We write to express our support for the West Coast Seafood Processors Association's (WCSPA) request that the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) pursue Section 32 purchases of Pacific hake (whiting) fillets during the 2026-2027 fiscal years.

The seafood industry represents a massive pillar of the Pacific Northwest's coastal economy, which intersects with all walks of life, rural and urban, coastal and inland; the industry's economic footprint stretches far beyond our coasts and into kitchen tables across the globe. With that in mind, we must ensure our fisheries have robust support and federal partnerships to maintain strong, healthy food supply chains and distribution networks.

Historically, Pacific whiting exports to Ukraine, one of the largest whiting fillet markets, reached up to nearly \$95 million per year, but instability in the region as a result of war has put that market in jeopardy and caused significant impacts to the supply chain. Compounded by trade embargoes, increased imported competition from low-cost proteins, inflationary pressures, rising operational costs, and more, these factors threaten the long-term stability and viability of this once-booming market and create uncertainty for coastal economies that rely on the whiting fishery's success for their livelihoods.

Over the last several years, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has worked with the West Coast seafood industry to support domestic distribution of surplus product and ensure that our food supply chain and fisheries operations aren't wholly disrupted by fluctuations or complete loss of markets abroad. We ask the USDA to continue that partnership by addressing these sustained market losses that have created vast economic strains and challenges for our seafood industry.

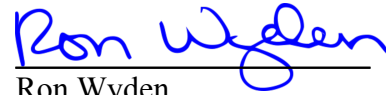
A Section 32 purchase of whiting fillets will directly support American harvesters, processors, and coastal economies during a period of significant market disruption and strengthen the resiliency of our food systems by supporting domestic protein production and distribution.

We request your full and fair consideration of this Section 32 purchase request and look forward to working with you in support of our commercial seafood industry.

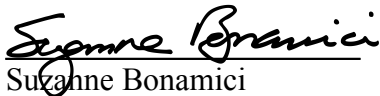
Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



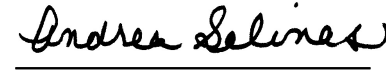
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



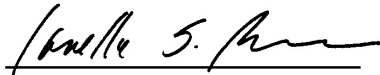
Cliff Bentz
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



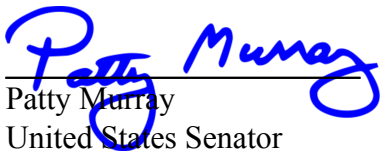
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



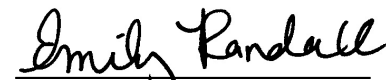
Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress