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December 9, 2015

Ms. Elizabeth Sablad
Environmental Scientist
US EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
(WTR-5)
San Francisco, CA 94105

Re: NEPA Review for Rose Canyon Fisheries Sustainable Aquaculture Project

Ms. Sablad,

I am writing to offer my support for the Rose Canyon Fisheries (RCF) application for permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to operate a commercial aquaculture farm in our nation's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off the coast of San Diego.

For a number of years I served as the Washington representative for the Ocean Stewards Institute, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting safe, sustainable open ocean aquaculture in U.S. waters. I am familiar with the open ocean aquaculture industry and understand the industry's immense potential. Based on my knowledge, I can confirm that the Rose Canyon Fisheries (RCF) is an outstanding example of how aquaculture should be done.

Our nation has a growing demand for seafood which cannot be met by wild fishing stocks. Over 80% of our seafood is imported -- the second largest component of our national trade deficit after oil. It is essential that we develop new domestic sources of quality seafood.

It is also essential that we develop those capabilities in an environmentally sustainable manner. RCF is a model for that. RCF will also foster innovative technologies to insure that our nation's aquaculture maintains the highest standards for sustainability and safety in the future. RCF will also generate jobs and economic development.

For all these reasons, I strongly support, RCF. Please approve the permits needed to allow the project to start.

Sincerely,

Richard L. Spees

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