

# Aquaculture in Federal Waters: Opportunities and Challenges

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# Why Offshore Aquaculture?

- Increased Interest
- Recent Challenges
- New Opportunities



# Offshore Aquaculture Challenges

- Intertidal
    - Aesthetics/Property Owners
    - Pollution Sources
    - Eelgrass
    - Other Habitat/Estuary Environmental Concerns
    - Vibrio/Biotoxins
  - Offshore
    - Use Conflicts (Fishing – Oil – Shipping – Transportation)
    - Cost and Logistics
    - Security
    - Technology
    - Biotoxins
    - Marine Mammals
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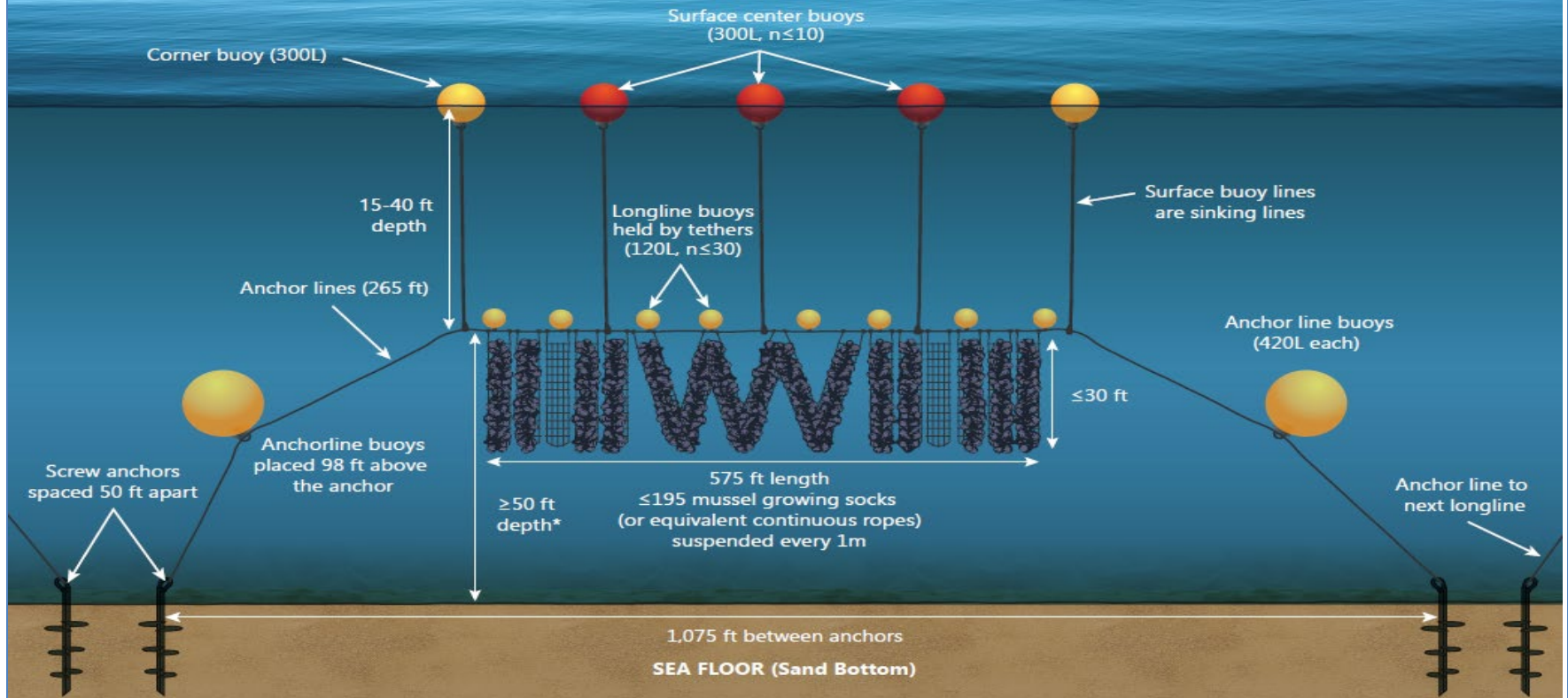
# Offshore Aquaculture Challenges: Technology and Gear

## General Plan for **Submerged Longlines**

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:

- Submerged buoyancy keeps lines tight despite surface waves and storms

Design Detail Below  
GRAPHIC NOT TO SCALE



# Offshore Aquaculture Challenges: Technology and Gear

- Proven track record internationally but no track record in U.S.
  - Additional Regulatory Requirements
    - Engineering Analysis
    - Navigational Risk Assessment
  - Cautionary Tale: Catalina Sea Ranch Project
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# Offshore Aquaculture Challenges: Scientific Uncertainty

- Marine Mammal Entanglement
- Benthic Impacts
- Results in significant monitoring plan costs



# Offshore Aquaculture Challenges: Regulatory Uncertainty

- No explicit authorization to regulate aquaculture in federal waters/no leasing framework
- Uncertainty in management and enforcement
- Has resulted in litigation: *Gulf Fisherman's Association v. National Marine Fisheries Service*



# Offshore Aquaculture Opportunities

- Agencies Seeking to Address Uncertainties
    - New NSSP regulations for offshore aquaculture
    - NOAA - NCCOS-NOS siting analysis
    - Executive Order on Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth
    - AQUAA Act
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# Offshore Aquaculture Opportunities: Executive Order

- Designates NOAA as lead agency on preparing EIS
  - Development of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas (Southern California and Gulf of Mexico)
  - Guidance document for federal aquaculture permitting requirements
  - Update to National Aquaculture Development Plan
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# Offshore Aquaculture Opportunities: AQUAA Act

- New draft recently introduced by Senator Wicker
  - Requires development of Aquaculture Opportunity Areas and management plans
  - NOAA would act as main permitting agency and lead agency under NEPA
  - Eliminates need to comply with MSA
  - Does not eliminate other permitting requirements
  - Would require adoption of additional regulations within 1 year of enactment
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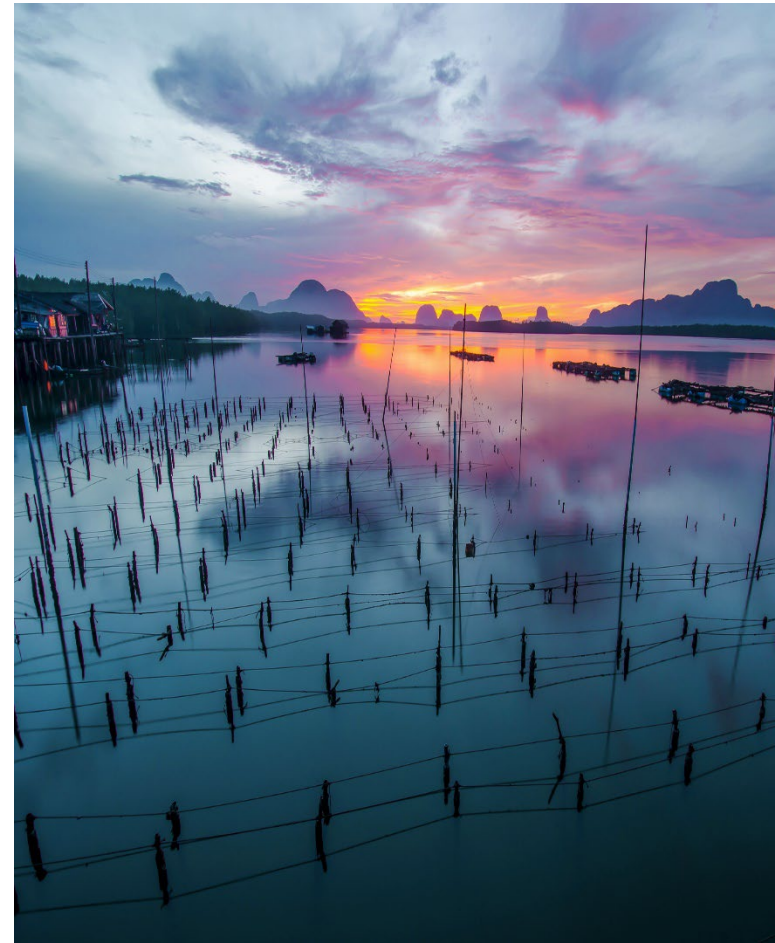
# Strategic Advantages

- NOAA as Lead Agency
- Programmatic EIS can address many environmental concerns
- A lot more area to work with
- Avoids nearshore NIMBY, user conflicts, and ecological issues
- Avoids state leasing issues



# Suggestions for Success

- Closely track NOAA development of AOA's and associated PEIS and participate in stakeholder meetings
- Site selection is key!
- Engage in early public outreach with agencies and stakeholders (particularly fishing interests)
- Short-Term: Anticipate monitoring and regulatory costs until development of NOAA AOA's and PEIS



# Questions?

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