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Intelligence

Poll: Americans want local seafood, stronger protections

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Environmental Defense Fund says 84% of U.S. registered voters surveyed would support regulated aquaculture

U.S. non-governmental organization Environmental Defense Fund on Wednesday released the results of a poll of registered American voters that showed the overwhelming majority would support locally grown seafood with strong environmental and consumer protections.

The poll found that 84 percent of respondents would support a proposal that would “examine the risks and opportunities of fish farming (also known as aquaculture) in U.S. federal waters before setting high standards and regulation for safe and sustainable aquaculture.”

According to EDF, 85 percent of the seafood that Americans consume is imported, with more than half of that from aquaculture, and often from regions of the world that lack strong food safety and sustainability standards.

“Americans value local seafood and want to know that the fish they eat is caught or raised safely and sustainably,” said Eric Schwaab, senior VP for ecosystems and oceans at EDF. “As aquaculture is increasingly a part of our seafood choices, special efforts are needed to get aquaculture right. By developing a new national standard, the United States can lead the way in ensuring that we meet consumer demand and grow local business while also reducing the environmental footprint of food



U.S. NGO Environmental Defense Fund polls registered voters and finds that 84 percent would support a well-regulated aquaculture industry. Photo courtesy of EDF.

production.”

For a full breakdown of the survey results, [click here](https://www.edf.org/sites/default/files/documents/BSG%20EDF%20Aquaculture%20Poll%20-%20National%20Report%20FIN.pdf)

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Nearly 70 percent of the respondents who eat seafood are concerned about where it originates. Nearly 90 percent of voters were in favor of increasing regulations, setting higher standards for seafood, making seafood more sustainable for the long term and reducing the environmental harms that can result from fish farming; 73 percent said they are likely to eat more seafood if it was raised or caught in the United States and 71 percent are likely to eat more if it came from proven sustainable sources.

The poll, conducted by Benenson Strategy Group, surveyed 800 registered voters nationwide from July 9 to July 15, 2021. The margin of sampling error is +/- 3.4 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval. EDF said the poll included registered voters “because they elect the decision makers on these issues and tend to be the main focus for Congress and state legislatures across the country.”

“As for the results, the country is increasingly polarized on many fronts these days, these results make it clear that the vast majority of the electorate – a broad swath of left, right, and center – agree that a thoughtful, science-based approach to aquaculture is best, and reject extreme views on both sides of the debate,” the organization said in an email response. “It’s rare to see that these days, but given we are talking about America’s food supply, economy and environment all at the same time, it’s also not that surprising.”

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