



Conducting scientific research projects that support sustainable fisheries, aquaculture, and agriculture

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Identifying research and development objectives and funding mechanisms to enhance Massachusetts seafood industry resilience

Dear Partner,

Coonamessett Farm Foundation (CFF) received funding from Massachusetts, added into the state budget by Representative David Vieira, to "conduct a study identifying research and development objectives and funding mechanisms to enhance Massachusetts seafood industry resilience."

The justification for this funding is to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of Massachusetts seafood and to support the Commonwealth's resilience to changing climate, ocean industrialization, and other stressors to coastal ecosystems and communities. Stressors include offshore wind energy installations, endangered species mandates, marine protected areas, and other ocean uses. For the purposes of this funding, the industry consists of fishermen, aquaculture growers, processors, distributors, and restaurant trades.

We believe that sustainable seafood production is an environmentally efficient way to produce food, given its relatively low carbon footprint and efficient use of resources, to mitigate the effects of climate change. We should also point out the economics; that Massachusetts was second to Alaska in ex-vessel value of landings in 2019 at \$681.1 million.

Our approach is to develop a report that identifies specific projects firmly backed by the seafood industry that meet core objectives of seafood resiliency in the Commonwealth and should be considered for funding. Proposed projects should focus on areas of research and improvement, such as, the development of new fisheries, enhancement of current fisheries, creating new aquaculture opportunities, and marketing local seafood products. We are also canvassing for feedback on how these projects can be funded.

CFF is soliciting from you summarized project ideas. An example of a fishery development project is attached to this letter for reference. We have staff available to help fishermen and others write up their project ideas into a preferred format. We would like to have a first draft of your project proposal by ***Friday, November 18th 2022***.

Please contact Justin Potter, the CFF Project Coordinator, for more information on how to participate. Justin can be reached at jpotter@cfarm.org or by phone: 508-356-3601.

Project Proposal Template Example:

Attachment A

Title: Developing a Fishery and Markets for Neon Flying Squid (*Ommastrephes bartramii*) Abundance and Distribution

Lead Organization: Coonamessett Farm Foundation, Inc.

Estimated Project Budget: \$400,000

Background: The proposed project will collect data on oceanic squid species not currently under fishery management to determine the feasibility of developing a new and sustainable fishery. Three commercial fishing vessels will be used to assess species availability and approximate distribution over a two-year period. Results from a past study (1997) indicate a valuable resource of neon flying squid, *Ommastrephes bartramii*, exists in the region.

The focus of the fishing trips will be locating dense aggregations of oceanic squid using jigging methods. This approach should establish the seasonal location of *O. bartramii* aggregations in a particular year. Secondly, we will attempt to determine the market demand for this species and other oceanic squid species found in dense aggregations. Oceanic squid could be jigged and carefully handled to fetch a higher, value added, price.

The North Pacific neon flying squid fishery catch averaged over 80,000 tons per year since 1996, highlighting the potential value of a North Atlantic fishery for this species. There is little existing information about the commercial potential of oceanic squid resources in the Northwest Atlantic. This proposal will explore the potential biomass of oceanic squid in Northwest Atlantic waters and means to locate them using an oceanographic model. Success in this venture could lead to diversification of the fishing industry, resulting in economic and social benefits in New England.

The specific goals of the project include:

- Identification of the best possible jigging gear and operational strategies by researching primary literature and contacting equipment suppliers.
- Purchase and installation of jigging machines and lights
- Establish an approximate market price by working with local fish dealers.

