Cornell Cooperative Extension
Marine Program

2025

EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF SEAFOOD PROCESSING

ON LONG ISLAND, NY

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
FISHERIES
EDUCATION | RESEARCH | SEAFOOD

Authors

Cornell Cooperative Extension Suffolk County Marine Team

Lead Authors

Amanda Dauman
Fisheries Specialist

Scott Curatolo-Wagemann
Senior Educator

Kristin Gerbino
Fisheries Specialist

Reviewers

Emerson Hasbrouck
Senior Educator

Tara McClintock
Fisheries Specialist

August Ruckdeschel
Clean Energy Coordinator

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the following partners for their support and guidance.

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets

Kate Fullam
Team Lead, Food Systems & Resiliency

Joshua Perry
Seafood Coordinator

Kelly Young
Deputy Commissioner

Tim Pezzolesi
Director, Agricultural Development Division

New York Sea Grant

Michael Ciaramella, MSc, PhD
Seafood Safety and Technology Specialist

This report was prepared by Cornell Cooperative Extension Suffolk County under contract with the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets at the direction of Governor Kathy Hochul. Industry survey data and research references are available upon request.

Table of Contents

Summary

Long Island has traditionally been a hub for whaling, fishing, and shell fishing, with ports located along its north and south shores. The New York fishing fleet continues to harvest seafood and ocean products along the entire east coast of the United States. Unfortunately, **Long Island's economic status as a provider of local seafood, relative to its neighboring state competitors, has steadily declined** due to several factors, including state-by-state disparities in fishery quota distribution, increased regulation across the industry, the degradation of some environmental inputs including water quality and habitat health, overharvest, and the near complete collapse of the Long Island Sound lobster fishery in the late 1990s. The degradation and disappearance of existing infrastructure and dockside access have limited growth in shellfish aquaculture and stifled the recovery of the commercial fishing fleet.

As traditional Long Island agriculture has pivoted to more on-site value-added processing and direct retail, a similar strategy has been suggested to reverse the decline in Long Island commercial finfish and shellfish harvest and production. Investing in and expanding local seafood processing options on Long Island could provide a more marketable product and increase market share among institutional and retail buyers. These processing options include but are not limited to cleaning, filleting, cold storage, freezing, packaging, and transportation. Seafood processing involves a wide range of services.

In 2024, New York State Governor Kathy Hochul launched New York's Blue Food Transformation initiative to bolster marine agriculture, promote a healthy environment, and provide New Yorkers with a nutritious source of local seafood. At the same time, the Governor directed the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Department of Environmental Conservation, Empire State Development, and other agencies involved in the production and marketing of seafood to evaluate and coordinate state policies and programs that impact aquaculture licensing, food safety, and economic development measures, and consider pathways for industry growth**. Over $4 million was allocated in the state budget for aquaculture farmers to invest in marine dock space, processing equipment, and other essential infrastructure to support the growth of their businesses.** These exciting new funding opportunities launched in the summer of 2025.

As part of the Blue Food Transformation initiative and to grow demand for local seafood, **Cornell Cooperative Extension Suffolk County (CCE Suffolk) was contracted to develop New York's first-ever seafood cuisine trail on Long Island.** The South Shore segment of the trail launched in March 2025 to reinvigorate and expand direct-to-consumer marketing of local, wild-caught, and farmed seafood, with a North Shore segment in development as of July 2025. A boost in consumer demand coupled with New York State institutional buying incentives would require additional inputs and investments in the commercial seafood industry to deliver a local product that meets the expectations of Long Island consumers. This feasibility report is intended to meet Governor Hochul's call to action and expand wholesale and retail options for new and existing seafood industry stakeholders.

This report uses a quantitative and qualitative literature review to assess the health of Long Island's seafood industry. It also summarizes and updates previous reports outlining the needs of the local seafood industry. **This literature review is enhanced with a survey of industry stakeholders.** The literature review includes an investigation of fishery and aquaculture trends in nearby states compared to current fishery landings and aquaculture production in New York.

CCE Suffolk researchers surveyed owners and employees at seafood markets, aquaculture farmers, wild-harvest commercial fishermen, and seafood wholesalers, to capture their current experiences, needs, and concerns about the availability of seafood icing, storing, and processing facilities on Long Island. Of the 156 industry members invited to complete the survey, 57 responses were received. Following the initial survey release, New York Sea Grant and CCE Suffolk hosted the 9th annual New York Seafood Summit in Riverhead, New York. Five seafood producers on Long Island spoke about the industry's needs during a public panel discussion. While the opinions and experiences captured during this study (within the survey and at the Seafood Summit) were invaluable to the creation of this report, they are not necessarily fully representative of the entire industry.

After conducting a thorough study, researchers conclude that Long Island's seafood industries require both infrastructure and policy changes to remain profitable in New York. Competing states have benefited from New York's losses in domestic seafood product landings, tax revenue, and economic activity, as New York fishermen are compelled to do business in those states. Although seafood processing is currently outsourced to other states and countries and the industry believes in-state processing could be valuable, there are additional short-term and intermediary steps that need to be taken before large-scale seafood processing can feasibly occur on Long Island. Such steps include preserving working waterfronts, building infrastructure for bulk ice production, and providing possible increases in fishing quotas, among other needs outlined in this report.

In this report, researchers outline the industry's needs as shared by industry stakeholders during the study period and make recommendations for meaningful actions to recover, support, and grow the seafood industry on Long Island. Rebuilding and supporting this industry will bring jobs, revenue, healthy food, and a sense of historic pride back to Long Island, while contributing to a more self-sufficient and resilient New York food system. The recommendations in this report build upon current efforts at the state and federal levels to strengthen regional food systems.

Key Action Steps

Any investment in new facilities should achieve short-term actionable successes while planning for long-term challenges and long-term program growth. There is a great opportunity for New York State to do more to preserve its domestic seafood industry. But the industry voice is clear – investment and policy support are needed now to ensure a profitable and environmentally sustainable future for New York seafood harvest and production.

Short Term Actions:

- Enact policies that protect and preserve the working waterfront.
- For all docks, repair and update current working waterfronts, including dock repair and building pack-out/unloading services.
- Establish three-phase power to the Shinnecock Commercial Dock to accommodate services like ice making and cold storage.
- Expand bulk ice-making to support the commercial fishing fleet and aquaculture on Long Island.
- Create a statewide New York seafood marketing plan.
- Work with the industry to facilitate permitting and market connections.

Long Term Actions:

- Act toward increasing New York commercial fishing quotas.
- Establish seafood processing on Long Island, including a small-scale community kitchen/processing center and a large-scale processor.
- Create incentives (e.g., bioextraction tax credit program) for kelp cultivation within oyster aquaculture farms in exchange for environmental health benefits produced by the farm.

Please see page 32 for a full action plan.

New York's Seafood Industry in Comparison to Other States

When compared with its closest neighbors, New York's seafood industry falls behind rival commercial fishing landings in both volume and total economic activity. Neighboring states, including Maine, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and Rhode Island, share the same climate, marine species assemblage, and (in the case of New Jersey and Rhode Island) the same fishing grounds as New York. All five states, including New York, have long histories in whaling, fishing, and shellfish harvesting. Even though New York's marine coast is limited to Long Island and New York City's boroughs, it is comparable to the other states in shoreline linear mileage, habitat diversity, and access to the Atlantic Ocean. Long Island and New York City account for most of the state's population and diversity. Hence, market availability for seafood in New York is comparable to that of successful seafood ports in other states. Given these similarities, and Long Island's past industrial success in seafood and marine products, New York should share the same success in seafood harvest and aquaculture industries as its neighbors.

Long Island currently lacks sufficient infrastructure and policy to support a seafood industry comparable to its neighbors. Figure 1 shows New York's commercial fishery revenue in comparison with the neighboring states. As shown, New York generally falls behind its neighbors in both production and revenue generation in the seafood sector. Table 1 provides a more detailed comparison of state-by-state disparities. Table 2 presents these findings as a summary of the three significant differences between the neighboring states' seafood industries and New York's.

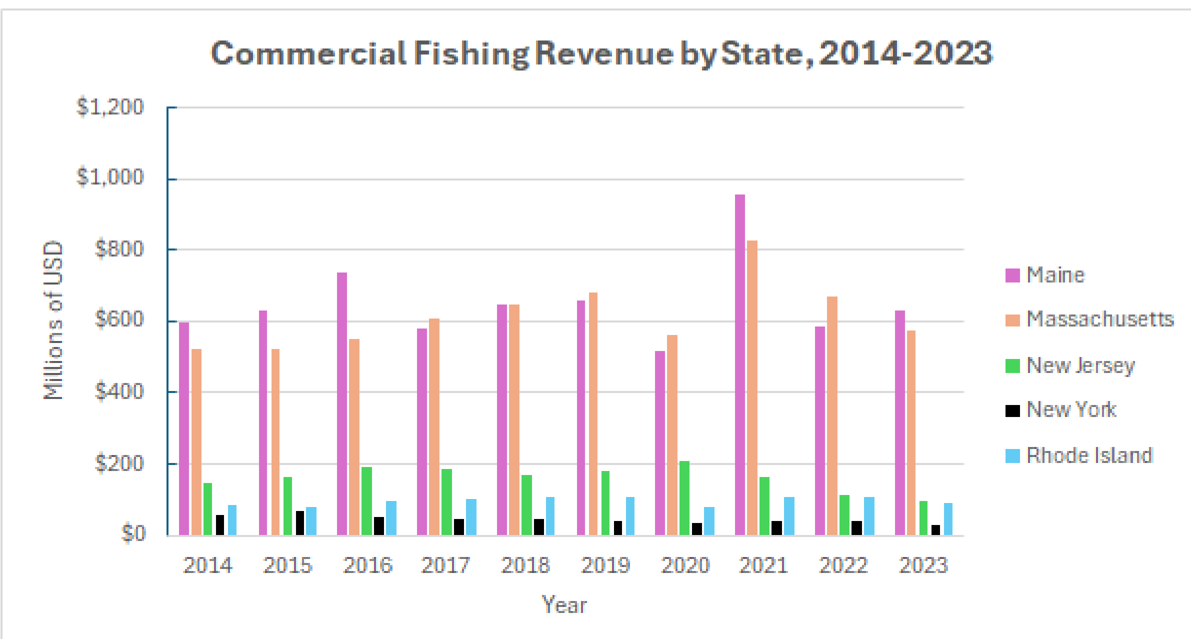

Figure 1: Revenue generated from commercial fishing (ex-vessel value of seafood landed) in ME, MA, NJ, NY, and RI from 2014 to 2023, the most recent year data was available. Data was not adjusted for inflation. Data from NOAA Fisheries One Stop Shop, 2025.[2]

Table 1: Comparing New York's Fishing and Aquaculture Sectors to Neighboring Northeast States

State	FISHERIES			
	Sales Revenue[1]	*# Jobs*[1]	*Top Landed Species (by Volume)* [1]	*Port Features*
MA	$3.4 billion	90,000	Sea Scallop	New Bedford: -The largest seafood hub in the Northeast - moves the most seafood in the region (88.4M pounds) and earns the most revenue from fishing in the entire nation ($443.2 million).[1] - Processors, dealers, and vessel service businesses (ice-making, cold storage, offloading service) are available and accessible on the working waterfront docks and wharfs. - BASE Seafood Auction[2] – a seafood auction house.
				Boston: - Boston Fish Pier has 19 major processors and wholesalers at the dock.
				Gloucester: - Cold storage, ice-making, offloading service, and shipping solutions via dockside businesses. - Two large-scale processors are dockside.
ME	$2 billion	40,000	American Lobster	Portland: - Processors, dealers, and vessel service businesses (ice-making, cold storage, offloading) are available and accessible on the working waterfront docks and wharfs. - Portland Fish Exchange[3] – a seafood auction house partly funded by the state.
				Stonington: - "Lobster Capital" of Maine – earned $389 million in 2022.[4] - Supported by the Stonington Lobster Co-op at the dock and the town's dock that has fishing supplies, dealers, and bait available. [5,6]
NJ	$528 million	6,524	Menhaden	Cape May: - NJ's largest port.[7] - Dockside modern processor, Lund's Fisheries, handles 992,000 pounds of seafood every day with automated processing and packaging equipment.[8]
				Barnegat Light: - Supported at the dock by Viking Village, an off-loading facility, with cold storage and ice production.[9] - Viking Village also does wholesale and distribution of the seafood landed there.
RI	$370 million	6,480	Squid	Point Judith & the Port of Galilee: - Support businesses at the port include Seafreeze (ice-making, freezing, cold storage, off-loading services, high-volume fishery sales),[10] Superior Trawl (gear builder, gear services), and The Town Dock (processor).[11]

NY	$[13]8 million	2,970	Squid	Montauk: - Offloading service and small-scale cold storage/ice available at Inlet Seafood[12] and Montauk Fish Dock.
				Shinnecock: - No three-phase power. - Cold storage is located in three truck trailers parked nearby.

State	MARINE AQUACULTURE			
	Revenue	*Top Cultivated Animal*	*Top Cultivated Plant*	*Notable Features*
MA	$29 million (in 2017)[13]	Oyster[14]	Sugar Kelp[14]	Aquaculture is the fastest-growing sector of the seafood industry in the state.[13] - Oyster cultivation alone yielded $30 million in 2021.[14]
ME	$85-110 million/yr[15]	Blue Mussels[16]	Sugar Kelp[16]	- 25 different species are cultivated in ME.[15, 16, 17] - The state facilitated the fishing and rearing of glass eels. This had created a partnership between fisheries and aquaculture in the state for eels.[18,19]
NJ	$7.2 million (in 2018)[20]	Oyster[20]	-	- There are 52 aquaculture farms in New Jersey.[20]
RI	$8.2 million (in 2023)[21]	Oyster[21]	-	- There were 84 aquaculture sites on 384 acres of coastline, worked by 228 aquaculture farm workers in 2023.[21]
NY	$7.4 million (in 2023)[22]	Oyster[23]	-	- There were 37 oyster farms on Long Island in 2023. - In 2023, 2,046 underwater acres were leased for saltwater aquaculture.[22]

End Notes for Table 1:

1. NOAA, (2025), *Fisheries One Stop Shop (FOSS): NOAA Fisheries: Landings,* Database. Values under "Sales Revenue" are the total amounts of all income generated by all seafood sold in each state in USD in 2022, including ex-vessel sales. This data was not adjusted for inflation and does not include sales figures or job figures related to imports.
2. Buyers and Sellers Exchange (BASE) Seafood Exchange: https://www.baseseafood.com/index
3. Portland Fish Pier: https://www.pfex.org/
4. Berleant, A., and DeAmbrose, F., (2023), "Stonington is Maine's top lobster port once again*",* The Ellsworth American.
5. Stonington Lobster Co-Op, (2015), *Our History,* Stonington Lobster Co-Op, Website
6. Town of Stonington Maine, (2025), *Pier manager: Town of Stonington, Maine,* Town of Stonington Maine Official Website.
7. Stolpe, N. (n.d.), *Cape May/Wildwood,* Cape May Page, Website.
8. Lund's Fisheries, (2022), *Seafood Processing Facilities in NJ, MA, and CA,* Lund's Fisheries, Website. https://lundsfish.com/
9. Viking Village, Inc. (2025), *Seafood Producers: Barnegat Light, NJ,* Viking Village, Inc., Website. https://www.vikingvillage.net/
10. Seafreeze: https://www.vikingvillage.net/
11. Town Dock: https://www.towndock.com/en-us/

12. Inlet Seafood: https://inletseafood.com/
13. Inglis, M., (2021). *Massachusetts Agriculture Snapshot 2021*, Southborough, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.
14. Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, (2021), *Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries 2021 Annual Report*, Report.
15. Maine Aquaculture Association, (2024), *Shellfish Farmers,* Maine Aquaculture Association.
16. Connolly, J. G., *et al*., (2023), *Research, Development, and Education Priorities for the Aquaculture Sector in Maine,* Walpole, Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center.
17. Maine Aquaculture Innovation Center, (2025), *Atlantic Salmon,* Maine Aquaculture.
18. Maine Department of Marine Resources, (2022), *The Maine Eel and Elver Fishery*, Department of Marine Resources, Website.
19. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, (2014), *Addendum IV to the Interstate Fishery Management Plan for American Eel*. Arlington.
20. Muetter, L., *et al*., (2021), *New Jersey Aquaculture Development Plan Update - 2021-2026 Molluscan Bivalve Shellfish,* Trenton, New Jersey Aquaculture Advisory Council.
21. Goetsch, B., (2023), *Aquaculture in Rhode Island 2022,* Wakefield, Rhode Island; Coastal Resources Management Council.
22. Vilsack, T., and Parsons, J., (2024), *2023 Census of Aquaculture,* National Agricultural Statistics Service, United States Department of Agriculture.
23. Ciaramella, M., *et al*., (2022), *New York Aquaculture Industry: Status, Updates and Opportunities*. Stony Brook; New York Sea Grant.

Table 2: Major Differences Between NY and Neighboring States

Supporting Policy	Supporting Services	Processing Capacity
Other states have benefited from historical regional fisheries allocations, which have enabled them to maintain and even expand their heritage fisheries and aquaculture industries, as well as their associated support industries. These benefits include larger fishery quotas for some species, policies that created linkages between fisheries and aquaculture, and reserved working waterfronts.	More generous landing allocations among rival states generated investment and maintenance in new and existing ice-making facilities, cold storage, fishing gear manufacturing, seafood auction houses, maintained dock space, and seafood marketing initiatives.	Most neighboring states have multiple large-scale wholesale and seafood processing firms that can handle thousands of pounds of seafood daily. Some of these firms are situated at commercial fishing docks. Long Island has no seafood processors on this scale.

New York Seafood Industry Challenges

While regional fisheries allocations across states have disenfranchised many commercial fishing fleets, re-apportioning fisheries allocations more equitably goes beyond the scope of this feasibility report. Policy and quota constraints on New York fisheries are discussed in more detail later in this report. **This study focuses primarily on the infrastructure needs for seafood processing.** While improved storage and processing facilities will not allow New York to exceed fish catch limits within targeted species, they can unlock opportunities to increase landings of undervalued and undermarketed fish species that are currently fished below allowable catch limits. This would increase both wholesale and retail opportunities available to Long Island fishermen overall.

Infrastructure Challenges

The lack of infrastructure is a significant hindrance to wild-capture fisheries and aquaculture within New York. Following are the major infrastructure issues expressed by industry stakeholders, including essential insights and direct quotes from surveyed participants.

An asterisk (*) denotes some of the issues already being addressed. Details on these efforts follow in the section entitled "Connecting Industry Needs."

Bulk Ice

Seafood is very perishable. Fishermen typically require several tons of ice to maintain the quality and safety of their product during fishing trips and to initiate the cold supply chain upon arrival at the dock.

There is limited bulk ice-making in Montauk and the existing capacity may soon disappear entirely due to the recent sale of the property that currently houses the ice-packing business. There is no ice-making at Shinnecock Commercial Dock or other Long Island ports.

New York fishermen at the 2025 New York Seafood Summit reported resorting to three burdensome practices to get the ice they need:

1) Making their own flake ice on their vessels, which uses their fuel supply to run the machines.
2) Utilizing 40-pound bags of ice, which is expensive and difficult to deal with.
3) Moving operations to neighboring states where they can get bulk ice.

Cold Supply Chain Infrastructure

Ice, cold storage, cold transport, and active freezing capabilities (e.g., blast freezing) are all essential for an industry based on perishable products, such as seafood. New York has limited access to bulk ice production, limited options for cold transport, and insufficient flash-freezing capacity. At the time of writing, cold storage is not readily available to most of the industry, particularly to fishermen that operate out of Shinnecock – Long Island's second-largest fishing port.

Several challenges arise as a result of the limited cold chain infrastructure:

- **Reliance on the Fresh Seafood Market:** The seafood industry in New York relies heavily on the fresh seafood market, which requires fast distribution and sales. This is not always possible due to fluctuating demand; thus, prices paid to fishermen and farmers are volatile. There is a demand and need for active freezing, such as blast freezing. Frozen seafood has a longer shelf life, making it more feasible for exports. It also allows the seafood industry to time the release of its product, giving them the flexibility to take better advantage of higher prices when demand and wholesale/retail prices are high.

- **Unpredictable Pricing Fluctuations:** Processors in other states regulate seafood availability and prices by freezing fresh stock when harvests are in season, ensuring a steady supply of each species, regardless of weather, regulations, low harvests, or other circumstances that may limit stock. This type of market regulation is not possible on Long Island.

> *"Freezing can add $3/pound on seafood. [It is valuable,] needed and worthwhile."*

- **Limited Refrigerated Distribution:** Cold transport for all sectors of the seafood industry (i.e., refrigerated vehicles) is essential. This need was voiced to researchers as the primary need of the aquaculture sector. During the study, it became clear that a refrigerated distribution system or company is necessary to transport aquaculture products from farms to markets on a larger scale. Aquaculture farms lack the capacity to expand their businesses in this manner. The Aquaculture Infrastructure Grants offered by New York State could address these needs and provide the seed funding necessary to spur additional private investment. An expansion of refrigerated distribution would also likely benefit wild-capture fisheries.

Processing *

Unlike other states, there are no large-scale processors for seafood on Long Island. Processing of seafood is primarily done by the wholesale buyer (i.e., retailer or restaurant), a few small-scale processors, or by fishermen at-sea (e.g., monkfish and skate). Both opportunities and losses arise from this structure.

> *"People want it cut. Fluke, cod – there is demand."*

- **Market Demand:** Consumers, grocery stores, and restaurants are increasingly demanding that seafood products be offered in accessible formats,[4] such as filleted rather than whole.
  For institutions, such as K-12 schools, processed seafood is a requirement. Large-scale production of minimally processed or value-added seafood products is not currently possible on Long Island, so the industry is unable to meet growing demand.

- **Value-Added Products:** The lack of a processing facility means local seafood cannot readily be turned into, or included in, other valuable products such as ready-made meals and pet food.

"We don't have any big wholesale processor that can handle thousands of pounds of fish a day."

- **Processing Outsourcing:** In some cases, such as with squid and seafood, processing is outsourced to other states or countries. This is not unique to New York. Most of the United States has a processing shortage, so seafood is exported for processing and then imported back in.

- **Packaging:** Local seafood packaging would open the door to branding and the creation of "shelf-ready" seafood products for inclusion in large grocery chains. Packaging can also enhance food safety and extend shelf life by removing oxygen from inside the package or using x-ray technology to scan products for impurities during the packaging process.

Waterfront Access, Safety, and Infrastructure *

The shrinkage of available working waterfront access and space presents a challenge for new farms or farm expansion. The functionality and safety of commercial pack-out docks (where seafood is unloaded from fishing vessels) in Montauk, Shinnecock, and other ports are major concerns.

- **Connecting Municipal Infrastructure:** The Ponquogue Bridge, the main route to Shinnecock Commercial Dock, was recently closed for maintenance and then reopened with a five-ton weight limit beginning in 2025. This has become a significant burden to seafood distribution from Shinnecock. In addition, Shinnecock Commercial Dock lacks three-phase power, eliminating the possibility of dockside services (e.g., ice-making) and processing for the fishing fleet there.

- **On-the-Water Safety:** At the start of 2025, the inlet used by the Montauk fishing fleet required emergency dredging due to the buildup of sediment, which had become a safety hazard. This issue forced Montauk fishing vessels to land their catches in Rhode Island, disrupting business and resulting in lost revenue for New York. Potentially, this could impact future fishing quotas for New York by indicating that fewer fish are being landed in the state.

Supply Chain Logistics

The flow of seafood on Long Island follows an indirect route back and forth across the island, as seen in Figure 2 on page 12. Throughout the study, interviewed stakeholders indicated that the supply chain is still operating in the same way it did when seafood harvested from Long Island's many ports took a direct route to the Fulton Fish Market, originally located in lower Manhattan. This worked at the time for Long Island fishermen, because trucking and fuel costs were not as expensive, Long Island seafood did not face as much competition from imports and foreign aquaculture, and there were fewer regulations and permits to manage.

Fulton Fish Market, now located in The Bronx at Hunt's Point Food Distribution Center and known as the Fulton Fish Market Cooperative (FFMC), is the largest fish market of its kind in the U.S.[5] and remains the industry's primary seafood buyer and distributor. Survey respondents reported that 47% of the seafood caught by Long Island fishermen ultimately makes its way to the FFMC. This figure is most certainly not representative of the entire industry. Feedback from the industry and previous studies[4] indicate that high-volume fisheries, such as those for whiting, squid, scup, and other species, primarily rely on the FFMC to accept their catch. Therefore, the figure is likely much higher. Inlet Seafood, a major pack-out dock in Montauk, informed researchers that 99% of their total catch in 2024 was shipped to the FFMC.

The FFMC dealers' role in the local supply chain is to possess the necessary Food Fish and Crustacea (FF&C) Dealers and Shippers License, as well as Federal Dealers Permits, among other licenses and permits, that enable them to be the first recipient of seafood from commercial fishing vessels. The FFMC is a long-standing, centralized market that provides NYC and regional food businesses with access to both domestic and imported seafood. In conversations with some of the FFMC dealers, they noted that they do not process seafood beyond cold or frozen storage, either on or off the premises at Hunt's Point. However, the findings of the Seafood Interagency Workgroup Report[5] and this study's interviews revealed that the FF&C Dealers and Shippers license requirements could be time- and cost-prohibitive for smaller processors and dealers operating on Long Island. A collaborative approach could be feasible.

Trucking is the primary method of distributing seafood on Long Island. Seafood resources and the markets for them on Long Island are largely separated. Unlike New Bedford, MA, and Portland, ME, New York's major seafood ports and farms are neither within nor adjacent to a major city, or directly adjacent to an arterial highway. All of Long Island's central commercial docks are situated along single-lane roads that become congested with traffic throughout the spring, summer, and fall due to increasing tourism and permanent residency on the East End of Long Island. Navigating this traffic is a significant burden for seafood distribution.

Long Island seafood farmers, fishermen, restaurants, and retailers cover the transportation costs associated with shipping seafood to the FFMC and back to Long Island. These costs can be expensive. Seafood trucking paid for by fishermen was the highest expense reported by survey participants, at an average of $48,300 per year. Fishermen report that their seafood in New York must be packed into 60-pound wax cardboard cartons to be sent to the FFMC. This practice is not observed in other major seafood ports in different states. In these other states, the distributors, dealers, and processors are typically located dockside, or fishermen can send seafood in bulk packaging, such as vats, to processors that are not situated at the docks.

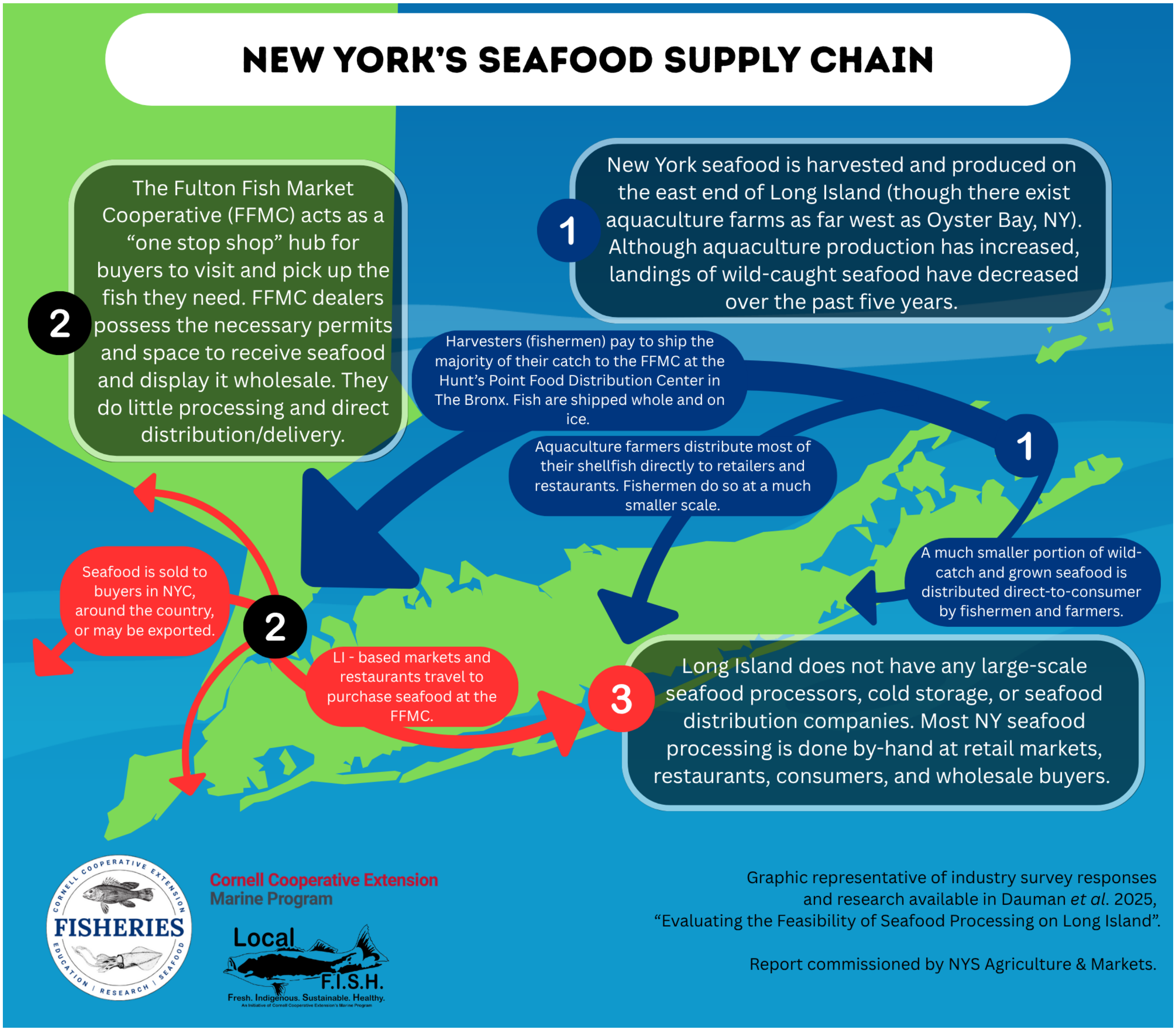

Figure 2: A flowchart map showing the general distribution pathways of locally harvested and grown seafood on Long Island. "Distribution" - in this study, as the movement of goods (mostly by truck on Long Island) - is represented by the colored arrows. Blue arrows and text bubbles represent the actions and businesses of producers (fishermen and aquaculture farmers); the black text bubble represents the actions and businesses of FFMC dealers; and red arrows and text bubbles represent the actions and businesses of fish markets, restaurants, and other seafood buyers.

Policy Challenges

As mentioned previously, policies and regulations within New York State and the region have a significant impact on the seafood industry on Long Island. Below are the regulatory challenges the industry faces, with quotes from the industry survey.

An asterisk (*) denotes some of the issues already being addressed. Details on these efforts follow in the section entitled "Connecting Industry Needs."

Quotas

New York state and regional fishery management councils create regulations about wild-capture harvest to ensure seafood is harvested sustainably. One method involves a quota system, in which a fishery fleet is allowed to harvest up to a certain amount of a given species annually. **For some species, such as summer flounder, New York has had much lower quotas than surrounding states**, despite fishing occurring within the same fishing grounds. These rival state fisheries are permitted to, in some cases, catch more fish or fish of smaller size from the same waters. **This quota inequity is a key focus of attention for New York fishermen.** Fishermen surveyed in this study feel strongly that the current New York quota is unfair and inequitable, and there are no good environmental or ecological defenses for the allocation distinction. The opposite can be true – Rhode Island and New Jersey fish fleets should not be burning fuel to trawl in waters closer to New York trawlers and fishermen.

- States divide their quota allocation into trip limits, which dictate how much of a particular species can be caught in a single fishing trip. These limits can change throughout the year. Trip limits for high-volume species, such as scup, create a volatile market in which increases in trip limits throughout the year can lead to market flooding. (Market flooding is when supply significantly outpaces demand, inevitably driving down the price paid to the fishermen.) Fishermen in the survey likened this situation to a race in which they are competing (both with each other and with fishermen from other states) to land their fish and get it to the FFMC first to get the best price. The reliance on the fresh market via the FFMC, combined with the lack of freezing or cold storage capacity on Long Island, makes it challenging to manage the market as described in the previous section.

"Change all limits to weekly limits instead of daily. Guys can focus on different fishes through the course of a week. For example, catch your week's limit of fluke on Monday then switch gears to target another species."

Fuel Tax Credit

> *"Fuel tax credit needs to go. [...] The guys just fuel elsewhere."*

New York fishermen are charged a fuel tax, which can be reimbursed after completing the paperwork for reimbursement. In the meantime, the tax strains cash resources and adds unnecessary tax paperwork for businesses. Other states, such as Rhode Island, have streamlined the process and eliminated the fuel tax for fishermen. To avoid the paperwork, time expense, and the out-of-pocket cash fuel tax expense, New York fishermen end up fueling out of state.

Working Waterfront *

The construction of waterfront private properties, marinas, and tourist areas has reduced the space available for new and growing aquaculture ventures, as well as dock space for commercial vessels. **Working waterfronts can be preserved in the same way as farmland is protected**. For example, changes made to the Peconic Bay region community preservation fund, a state law that created a 2% real estate transfer fund for the preservation of open space and farmland, was amended to additionally allow the "preservation of lands necessary to protect fisheries and water dependent uses essential to maintain and enhance maritime heritage."[1] Suffolk County on Long Island recently adopted legislation to similarly preserve working waterfronts.[6]

Permitting *

> *"I was not old enough to have had a fluke endorsement or [striped] bass tags but I do have a foodfish license. I would be able to make a better living if I could also harvest fluke and [striped] bass."*

> *"[I suggest] allowing personal NYFF (New York Food Fish) permits to be transferred so new fishermen will have access to moratorium permits such as summer flounder and striped bass and whelk."*

Also highlighted in the recent 2024 Seafood Interagency Workgroup Report,[7] fishermen and aquaculture farmers in the survey expressed concerns about the challenges they have experienced while trying to obtain specific permits, such as permits for kelp growing within oyster lease areas, various types of fishing permits, and dealers' licenses.

For some small businesses entering the industry, the requirements associated with specific permits and licenses have become time- and cost-prohibitive. Others, such as the moratorium on specific fishing permits, such as striped bass and lobsters, can render a fishery completely inaccessible. These processes and requirements should be re-examined and streamlined to alleviate the industry's burdens and enable new parties to enter the market, while maintaining the ecological, environmental, and economic health of the industry.

Marketing and Public Support*

The industry would benefit from a concerted marketing effort highlighting New York local seafood by the state and/or the agencies that regulate it. **Recent efforts, such as the establishment of the Long Island Seafood Cuisine Trails, have been recognized and lauded by the industry as significant steps forward.** However, more can be done to make seafood a regular part of people's diets, rather than on special occasions. The industry will also need public support to preserve and develop working waterfronts. Although these needs are most important on Long Island, such efforts should extend throughout the state.

> *"I think just more consumer awareness about sustainability and what wild caught New York fish has to offer [is needed]. Trying to make fish a multi night a week meal as opposed to a "special occasion" meal could be very beneficial to the seafood industry. Also introducing younger people to fish and showing them how to handle and cook fish at home. As the older generations are passing, the younger people aren't eating/cooking as much seafood."*

Impacts of the Challenges

As a result of the challenges highlighted above, the growth of local Long Island seafood is consistently constrained and underperforms relative to its more advantageously placed neighbors. These constraints, in practice, have several impacts, listed below.

The seafood industry is unprepared to compete with foreign seafood.

New York seafood is more expensive and less available than imported seafood due to high overhead costs, inefficient and costly distribution logistics, and regulatory burden and disconnection with the market.

> *"Everyone talks about "green," but importing fish when we have access to our own seems counter-intuitive."*

As a result:

- Consumers are becoming less familiar with local seafood species.
- Consumers, including restaurants and retailers, have come to rely on the stability in price and availability that imports provide.

- Imports dominate New York's seafood industry, accounting for up to 99% of all seafood sales in the state, attributed to imports.[2] This is the highest proportion of imports amongst the five regional states evaluated in this study – ME, MA, RI, NY, and NJ.

Fishermen move to Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Massachusetts to run their businesses more economically. These other states can offer lower overhead costs for fuel and have dockside services, such as ice making, that are either too expensive or unavailable in New York.

New York fishermen choose to land their seafood in surrounding states. Other states can have larger quotas, dockside services, processors, and often better prices for their seafood. Vessels can obtain landing licenses in other states, so when New York vessels land fish in other states, this leads to lost revenue for New York. Besides the immediate economic losses of doing business like this, it also underrepresents the size and viability of New York's commercial fishing fleet.

> *"Trucking is a huge cost. It's one of the benefits in RI and Cape May [NJ]."*

Commercial fishery landings in New York are on the decline.

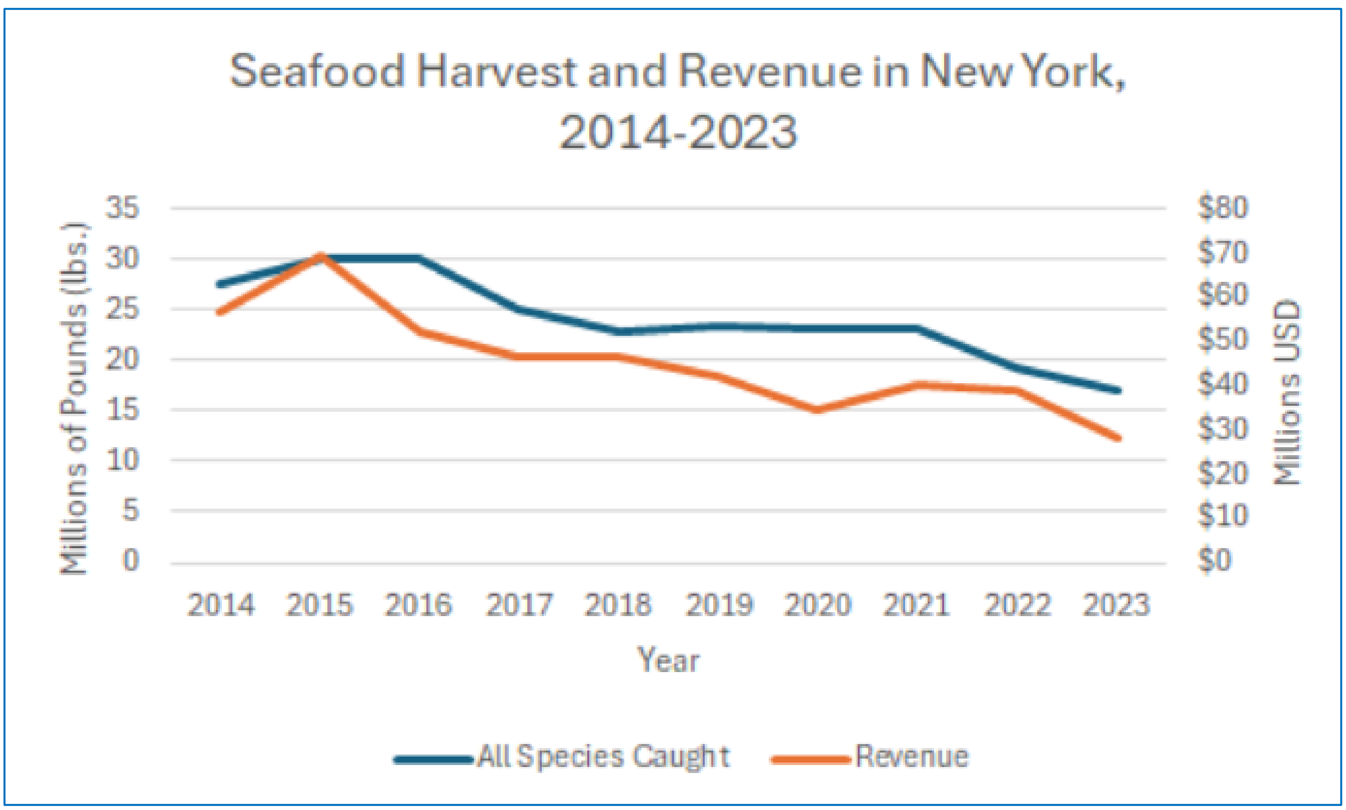

Figure 3: A line graph showing the downward trend of wild-catch seafood landings (blue line, in millions of pounds of seafood) and the ex-vessel revenue earned from that catch (orange line, in millions of dollars, unadjusted for inflation) in New York from 2014 to 2023, the latest year with full data.[2]

Marine aquaculture has remained mostly small-scale. Commercial kelp/seaweed production is limited to three farms with permits to grow sugar kelp.

In summary, these impacts have ultimately resulted in lost employment opportunities, innovation in seafood processing and recipe experimentation, as well as a decline in overall economic growth in a heritage Long Island industry that sustains broad warmth and popular support. Unfortunately, feedback from the local industry indicated that members do not necessarily feel supported by local elected officials, and they believe there is a lack of policy that supports industry growth.

> *"[We need] more support for getting the infrastructure we need to continue to successfully fish, such as proper pack out facilities. If we don't have infrastructure, we will eventually go out of business. Legislative support locally, in Albany, and in DC [is needed], similar to what the Farm Bureau does for farmers (including oyster farmers)."*

When asked if there were other initiatives needed on Long Island besides processing capacity, one respondent to the survey said:

> ***"Fortunately, we have the ability and opportunity to address some of these issues, particularly those related to infrastructure needs, with policy and funding support to bolster and enhance local seafood storage and processing capacity."***

The following section outlines the needs of New York's seafood industry and shares recommendations for feasible actions, informed by industry commentary.

New York Seafood Industry Needs

In this section, the needs of New York's seafood industry are organized into two tiers:

- The **"Support"** tier addresses the most pressing industry needs to alleviate issues constraining the industry, flatten the downward trend for wild catch landings in New York (as shown in Figure 3), and support shellfish and kelp farming on Long Island.
- The **"Growth"** tier addresses the needs that would expand the industry, such as initiatives that would increase markets for wild fish harvests, increase shellfish and kelp production on farms, and take other actions to reach and create new markets currently inaccessible to the local seafood industry.

Structurally speaking, "Support" needs should be addressed before the "Growth" needs can be actuated to become economically and industrially feasible.

A **"Policy"** tier has been added to reflect needs that are outside the scope of infrastructure but should be addressed to ensure infrastructure actions are viable. Table 3 further separates the three tiers of need by the sector of the seafood industry that they can assist.

Table 3: Major Industry Needs by Sector and Tier

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">SUPPORT TIER</th></tr>
<tr><th>Wild-Catch Fisheries</th><th>Shellfish Farms</th><th>Kelp Farms</th></tr>
<tr><td>Bulk Ice Making</td><td>Distribution Services</td><td>Pack Out Dock Functions**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pack Out Docks/Repair</td><td>Cold Storage**</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Cold Storage</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Working Waterfront Safety/Access
(i.e., functioning bridges, docks, inlets, truck and boat water access, etc.)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">GROWTH TIER</th></tr>
<tr><th>Wild-Catch Fisheries</th><th>Shellfish Farms</th><th>Kelp Farms</th></tr>
<tr><td>Freezing</td><td>Processing (Shucking)**</td><td>Processing (Drying, grinding)**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Processing (Filleting)</td><td>Packaging/Canning</td><td>Packaging</td></tr>
<tr><td>Packaging/Canning</td><td></td><td>Freezing</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-Processing Space</td><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Value-Added Product Production</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">POLICY TIER</th></tr>
<tr><th>Wild-Catch Fisheries</th><th>Shellfish Farms</th><th>Kelp Farms</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">New York Seafood Marketing**</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Community and Local Support</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Protect and Preserve Working Waterfront*</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">Streamline regulations and permitting**</td></tr>
<tr><td>Increase New York quotas for summer flounder, black sea bass, etc.**</td><td colspan="2">Develop nutrient/carbon/bio-extraction credit program.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Eliminate fuel tax for fishing vessels.**</td><td></td><td>Allow kelp to be grown on county lease areas.*</td></tr>
</table>

*Initiatives already moving forward but have not concluded yet.

**Initiatives that have been acknowledged but have more work to be done or need to be expanded upon.

New York’s Seafood Species

New York's seafood production is diverse, featuring established and growing fisheries and aquaculture operations. Based on survey respondents' recommendations**, Table 4 highlights a variety of New York seafood market opportunities that could benefit from enhancing processing infrastructure.** These species are plentiful, caught or farmed in large volumes in New York, and have a growing or established market, but their price to market is volatile.

Fishermen could gain better market stability through value-added processing, or the species could become more valuable and frequently used with minimal processing (e.g., fileted and packaged). In this report, “Underutilized” refers to a natural resource that is abundant in the wild but remains unknown to or underappreciated by (and under consumed by) seafood consumers.

Table 4: Enhanced Processing Infrastructure Opportunities by Species

Species	Abundance	Needs	Benefits
Bluefish	High Abundance	Filleting	Marketability Increase
Butterfish	High Abundance Underutilized	Freezing	As Bait Availability/Price Stability
Dogfish	High Abundance Underutilized	Freezing Filleting	Availability/Price Stability Export
Jonah & Rock Crab	Underutilized	Freezing Processing	Marketability Increase
Kelp	Farmed	Processing-Drying Growing is allowed in oyster lease areas.	Increase output Healthy Food Source Environmental Benefits
Monkfish	Unmet Quota	Freezing Filleting	Availability and Price Stability Export
Oyster	Farmed Fast-Growing	Distribution Shucking	Increase availability Opens new markets Environmental Benefits
Scup	High Abundance High Quota Underutilized	Freezing Filleting	Availability and Price Stability Marketability Increase Export
Sea Robin	High Abundance Underutilized	Freezing Filleting	Marketability Increase

Silver Hake (Whiting)	High Abundance High Quota Underutilized	Freezing Filleting	Marketability Increase Availability/Price Stability
Skate	High Abundance Underutilized 4 Species	Skinning Freezing	As Bait Marketability Increase Availability/Price Stability Export
Squid	High Abundance High Catch	Cleaning	Keeps processing in state
Summer Flounder (Fluke)	High Abundance Low Quota	Filleting	Market Need Addressed

Connecting Industry Needs

With Market Demand

There is demand for local, New York-harvested seafood through the following channels:

- **Popular seafood species** - squid, clams, flounders, black sea bass, striped bass, scallops, and oysters – are caught and grown in New York. These species have strong, established markets and are well-known to both native New Yorkers and visitors alike.

- There has been growing demand among consumers for sustainable, traceable, and local foods. **Traceability-focused consumers** want to know where their seafood comes from and that they are making ethical eating decisions.

- **Farmers' and Green Markets** are becoming more popular, and these markets are seeking to add seafood vendors to their offerings.

- In a similar vein, there has been a large **Farm to School** push around the country to connect locally grown food to public school meals. In-state and national incentives are available to enable schools to participate in this movement.

- The COVID-19 pandemic made it clear to legislators in New York that the state needs to depend more on its local resources and strengthen its food supply chains. **Nourish New York and other institutional purchasing** could leverage public funding toward the purchase of local seafood.

With Market Opportunities

The following are open markets and support services that the seafood industry may find helpful, which could also be of interest to other businesses or the state.

- New York school districts do not currently have easy access to New York-caught or grown seafood due to the lack of **usable, processed formats, sustained availability, and unstable prices**.
- **Infrastructure providing cold storage and freezing capabilities** will diversify fishermen's income and increase markets for less valuable species. As an example, such expansion can include the exportation of species deemed undesirable in the U.S. market.
- **Oyster farms are expanding and increasing on Long Island** with New York State grant funding. Enhanced infrastructure could present an opportunity for other businesses to fill their need for a distribution hub.
- Oyster farmers are interested in growing kelp alongside their oysters. Encouraging combined oyster and kelp aquaculture would be a two-pronged opportunity:
    - Farmers would increase their income via an additional crop (kelp) and increase job opportunities as they expand to accommodate it.
    - **Aquaculture of oysters in conjunction with kelp** is a known natural and passive way to improve inshore water quality and increase habitat area.
- **New York's fisheries are dominated by the fresh market.** Still, there is a need and demand for frozen and value-added production by the industry to increase their income and stabilize the availability of local food to consumers.
- New York anglers took over 16 million fishing trips in 2022.[8] There is an opportunity to provide **New York-caught or grown bait** to this sector (and to the commercial fishing sector).

With In-State Initiatives

The following initiatives could be incorporated or expanded to meet the industry's needs.

- **Governor Hochul's Blue Food Transformation[1] initiative** is set to reinvigorate New York's seafood industry through multiple channels, including the following already underway:
    - The initiative aims to support marine farmers with more than $4 million in grant funding for marine farm infrastructure, including dock space and processing equipment.

- The initiative has also called upon other state agencies to evaluate and coordinate policies, programs, and licenses that will lessen the burdens on New York aquaculture and help it to grow, which resulted in the Inter-agency Task Force and its report.[5]

- The Long Island Seafood Cuisine Trail[9] is a local and tourist route authorized under the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets that directs consumers to businesses that serve New York seafood. A trail along the South Shore of Long Island is open and a North Shore trail is being developed.

- The Governor's 2025 State of the State[10] address also included plans for the **expansion of agriculture education in New York schools**. Such a program, which provides for aquaculture and commercial fishing, will bolster the community support the industry needs to regain and rebuild its infrastructure.

- **The Governor's Executive Order No. 32[11]** - ESTABLISHING STATE AGENCY FOOD PURCHASING GOALS FOR NEW YORK STATE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS – provides a timeline to state agencies to steadily increase the percentage of New York-produced foods in their food purchases. Expanding seafood processing will give these agencies easier access to New York seafood.

- **New York Sea Grant's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan**,[12] which includes actions to "promote and support harvest and processing techniques that lead to safe, sustainable, high-quality food as well as economic, social, and ecosystem benefits," is in place.

- **New York City FoodForward's 10-year plan[13]** includes plans to increase food purchases directly from local and regional sources, as well as to allow increased funds to procure food from environmentally friendly sources. Long Island's seafood needs to be ready to fill in for these initiatives.

- Suffolk County Executive Edward P. Romaine is currently overseeing initiatives to address the industry's needs, some of which have been outlined so far. These initiatives included holding a seafood festival to enhance LI seafood marketing, as well as developing plans and a request for proposals to **increase seafood processing capacity in Suffolk County**. These ideas and initiatives were shared during the March 2025 Seafood Summit.

With the Federal Climate

On a federal level, the April 17, 2025 Executive Order (EO) "*Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness,*"[14] signed by President Donald Trump, appears to address some of the needs expressed by the fishing industry in the study.

For example, the Order directed the **National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to expand exempted fishing permits and develop a seafood trade strategy** that addresses unfair competition by seafood imports, among other initiatives. Rising tariffs set forth by the President are also intended to offset the price advantages of imported goods over American goods, which will also affect the seafood industry.

While details on how to accomplish the goals outlined in the Executive Order have not been finalized, New York has an opportunity to respond to this situation through its actions to rebuild its seafood sector, along with the necessary infrastructure and policies to produce, process, and distribute products.

New York Seafood Industry Recommendations

An aggregation of industry feedback helped develop the following hypothetical processing facility, which could serve multiple, local, and decentralized seafood operations. Many of the needs must meet local needs and conditions based upon:

- clearly identified industry accessibility, needs, and use;
- workforce availability (vs. traffic and travel to work logistics);
- distribution logistics and costs;
- utility constraints;
- property zoning; and
- property price.

Figure 4 is a map that condenses the summary of locations for potential seafood infrastructure, based on industry suggestions and research conducted during this study. Not all these locations are equally feasible or advantageous. The possibilities shown in Figure 4 are further broken down into the three most viable and beneficial hypothetical facilities and their possible alternatives in the next section.

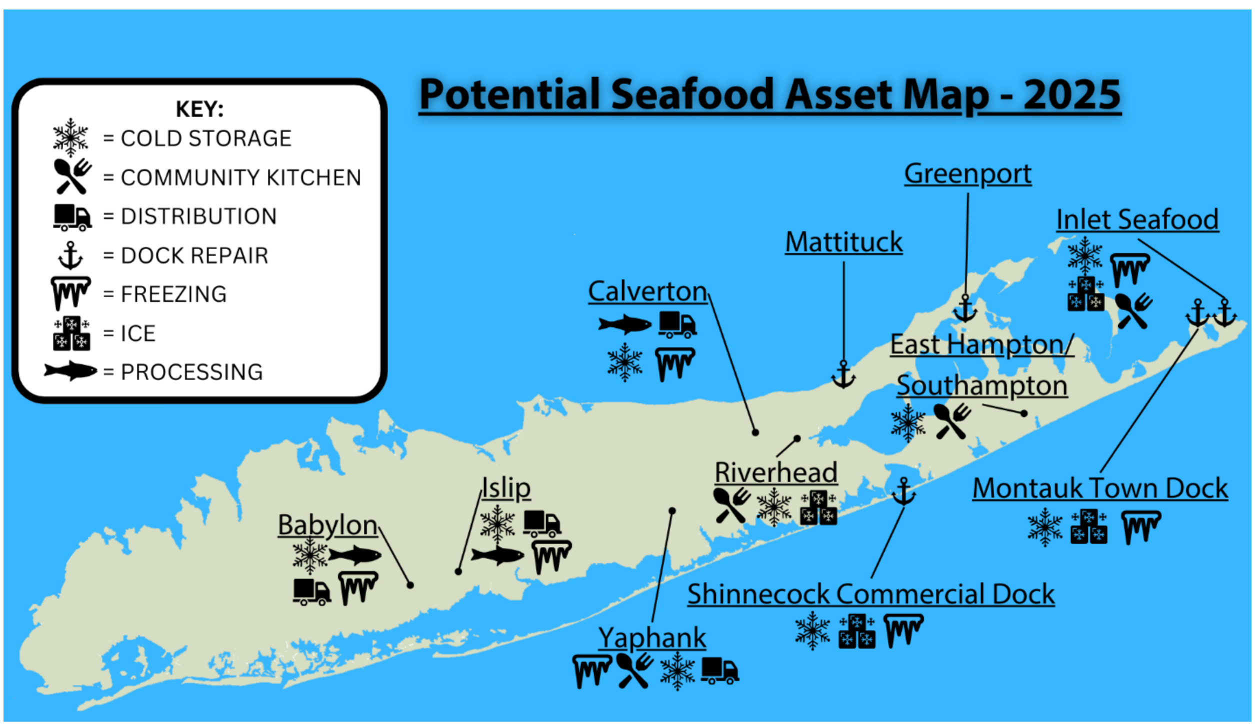

Figure 4: A map showing possible locations for decentralized and specialized assets for the seafood industry. Some locations are more feasible and/or helpful to the industry than others. See the later section: "The Hypothetical Facilities and Scenarios."

The Hypothetical Facilities and Scenarios

Facility #1 – Montauk Ice & Cold Storage

Location: Montauk Fish Dock *OR* Inlet Seafood Dock

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Montauk Ice and Cold Storage</th></tr>
<tr><td>Strengths</td><td>Weaknesses</td></tr>
<tr><td>Closest to the most significant component of the wild-catch fleet
Addresses the immediate need for bulk ice-making on Long Island
Addresses the need for more cold storage at Montauk
Mobile units are cheaper (renting is possible before purchase) and more flexible than a permanent building
Basic infrastructure, including water and electricity, is available in Montauk</td><td>Cold storage and freezing are only directly serving Montauk fishermen and not fishermen or farms elsewhere on Long Island
Refrigeration, freezing, and ice making will increase power needs and subsequent bills to the dock owner
Saltwater ice-making increases power consumption even more
Any future community kitchen space would only serve Montauk fishermen and nearby farms</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities</td><td>Threats</td></tr>
<tr><td>Use of mobile units means expansion, shrinkage, or movement is possible
Adding unit(s) to create minor processing kitchens is possible
Cold storage enables fishermen to grow their small businesses
Freezing capabilities open up new markets, including exports, institutions, and more</td><td>Traffic in and out of Montauk makes ice delivery to other ports and farms a challenge
Year-round workforce availability may be a challenge
Water and waste disposal logistics
Space for growing numbers of units is finite at both locations</td></tr>
</table>

Description: This processing option would use the cold storage mobile units described in the appendix to establish flake ice-making, cold storage, and active freezing at either of the central docks in Montauk. Mobile units were chosen because they are modular and offer the option to rent units before purchase. This option provides the flexibility to grow, re-allocate, or shrink as needed, without requiring a long-term economic commitment. Mobile units are more cost-effective than building and establishing brick-and-mortar operations, allowing them to serve as a practical “field test” before establishing more permanent fixtures. The units offer extended space for small-scale processing in the future, including a “shared-use kitchen” area for filleting and packaging, which fishermen can use. Ice making here could service all vessels operating out of Montauk. Additional infrastructure, such as cranes, conveyors, or hoses, would be required to pump the ice onto vessels, making this plan truly functional.

These mobile units could also deliver ice and other vital supplies to Long Island docks on a regular schedule, including the Shinnecock Commercial Dock, Mattituck, and Greenport. Aquaculture operations could be added to delivery schedules as needed. The mobile units in Montauk would require trucking access, while other docks, such as Shinnecock, would need a receiving and storage facility for the ice.

Assuming Shinnecock still lacks three-phase power at this junction, such a facility will need to be either:

1) located on the mainland close to Ponquogue bridge with self-service options or van service to the dock with pumping capabilities to get the ice into boats' fish holds; or
2) equipped with generator-powered units at the dock, also with pumping capabilities. Fuel for the generator could be paid for cooperatively by fishermen, the town, county, state, and the current dock owners.

Alternative 1 - Two-Port Investment: Both Montauk and Shinnecock would secure their mobile units for ice, cold storage, and freezing, with the possibility of future expansion capacities for kitchen space, each serving the fishermen at their respective ports. Sales of ice from either location to boats in Mattituck, farms, and other destinations can be facilitated through small-scale trucking or pickup. Shinnecock would still need to identify a mainland location or an on-site operation powered by generators. This alternative would have the benefit of avoiding the East End traffic that can hamper ice delivery logistics. However, any such development at Shinnecock becomes a challenge should three-phase power remain unavailable.

Alternative 2 – Three-Port Investment: This is similar to Alternative 1, but Mattituck will also have its small ice maker and cold storage unit(s) to serve fishermen and nearby farmers directly. This would be a valuable investment and asset to the many oyster farms located on the North Fork.

Possible Owners or Operators: This depends on the location of these units, so it is unclear whether the owners of the docks where the units are placed would own and operate them. However, it may also be beneficial if the fishermen cooperatively own and operate the units.

Facility #2 – NY Seafood Shared-Use Community Kitchen

Location: Riverhead

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">New York Seafood Shared-Use Community Kitchen</th></tr>
<tr><td>Strengths</td><td>Weaknesses</td></tr>
<tr><td>Provides a permitted, inspected, and approved area to industry for the self-processing of seafood harvest
Location is accessible: centrally located to both North and South Forks, and easily accessible via the LIE
Refrigerated vans allow the safe transport of seafood products
Addresses the primary need of aquaculture farmers for product distribution</td><td>Traffic and distance are accessibility issues for Montauk-based industry members
Requires paid coordination and staff Unclear which party bears the financial burden
Helps interested individuals, rather than the industry as a whole (niche)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities</td><td>Threats</td></tr>
<tr><td>Industry members can expand their businesses and income via the sales of processed and value-added catch/harvest
Van fleet could open an opportunity for a larger-scale oyster farm distribution service</td><td>Needs regular use by the industry to maintain
Insurance for both food safety and van rental, as well as umbrella permits and food safety training for users, may be cost-prohibitive for the facility or individuals
Needs a large parking area for the van fleet</td></tr>
</table>

Description: Riverhead was frequently cited as a centralized location that the seafood industry needs by multiple survey respondents throughout the project. Since Long Island's seafood industry is primarily located on the North and South Forks, Riverhead is geographically well-positioned and is connected to the main roads leading to and from both the North and South Forks. Riverhead is also located at the terminus of the Long Island Expressway (LIE), making it more accessible to western industry members and customers. Depending on the situation, it may work out both logistically and financially for a small-scale processor to rent space dockside rather than truck small volumes of fish to a centralized location.

A shared-use community kitchen could serve as a space for fishermen and growers to process or package the seafood they harvest before selling it through their existing businesses. As discussed in the appendix, this would differ from the incubator in Calverton in that it acts as a space for food processing rather than a business development center for new enterprises. This space would be used by fishermen and growers seeking a permitted area to fillet, shuck, and/or create value-added products from their harvest on their own time.

The shared-use seafood community kitchen would provide multiple kitchen spaces for daily rent, including a stainless-steel fillet table, a commercial stove, and ample counter space. There will also be cold storage space for rent for finished, processed harvest. Specialty spaces for kelp processing, automated fillets, active freezing, and other specialty needs could also be made available.

The kitchen should be accompanied by a small fleet of refrigerated vans for rent. The facility would require at least three coordinators to oversee the coordination of spaces, facility upkeep, rules, and logistics.

Alternative 1: *Different Location:* Yaphank Meat Processing Facility
A shared-use community kitchen is the most realistic seafood-oriented use for the old meat processing facility located at the Suffolk County Farm and Education Center in Yaphank, as discussed in the appendix. The Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis for this location is roughly the same as for a shared-use kitchen in Riverhead, with the added weakness that it would be further from the seafood industry on Long Island. There are also additional access and/or odor concerns associated with the facility, as the farm attracts thousands of visitors who may find seafood processing incongruous with its existing uses. However, the facility remains in good condition, is owned by the county, and could provide a lower-cost alternative to other previously noted options, despite some accessibility concerns.

Alternative 2: *Different Location:* Geographic middle point between Shinnecock and Montauk
Fishermen and aquaculture growers are not monocultural and have expressed different needs. Fishermen have a greater need for processing, such as a shared-use community kitchen. Shellfish growers indicated that their primary need is distribution, rather than processing. With these differing needs in mind, a shared-use kitchen established between Montauk and Shinnecock may be the most advantageous for fishermen. However, the summertime traffic in the Hamptons will continue to pose transportation challenges to fishermen who would expect to use the facility during reasonable hours. Meanwhile, a facility located further east on the South Fork may prevent most North Fork seafood businesses from using the facility.

Possible Owners/Operators: Food or community-based not-for-profit organization(s).

Facility #3 – Long Island Seafood Processing

Location: Calverton – Light Industrial Zone

Long Island Seafood Processing Facility at Calverton	
Strengths	Weaknesses
• Location – central and accessible to most of the industry, potential customers, and workforce ○ Location close enough to many shellfish farms and the Shinnecock Dock, reducing trucking costs • Diverse, but small-scale operations = testing and growth into markets • Local seafood can be distributed more easily/ in a format necessary to some markets (institutions) • NY food systems become more self-reliant	• Seafood would still need to be trucked from the ports to the facility • Fish coming from Montauk would face transportation challenges • Focusing on local species will require parallel and coordinated marketing efforts to create new markets and demand • Growth could be slow as the facility finds its niche(s) within the industry ecosystem of Long Island
Opportunities	Threats

• Local seafood into:
  ○ Exports
  ○ Institutional feeding, particularly grade schools.
  ○ Grocery chain placement
  ○ Value-added products
  ○ Pet food
• NY local/brand recognition
	• Water usage is high – disinfection for recirculation requires expensive technology
	• Waste disposal considerations
	• Seasonality and availability of raw seafood stock
	• Limited availability of skilled workers and/or training costs
	• Retail accessory – nearby fish markets are already selling local fillets. The focus will have to be on niche items, island-wide wholesale, and delivery services

Description: Riverhead was cited as the best location for a large-scale seafood processing facility that could feasibly serve the whole industry. As discussed, Riverhead is centrally located for much of the industry and has access to the Long Island Expressway. Although industry may have been considering downtown Riverhead, it may be more realistic to locate the facility within the light industry zones of Calverton, a hamlet within the Town of Riverhead but adjacent to downtown Riverhead proper.

Such a facility could begin small, allowing it to adapt, expand, and diversify its operations later on as needed. It could first focus on species diversity, stabilizing the availability of New York species to make local catch and aquaculture competitive within the existing seafood market landscape, with a focus on local distribution. Eventually, the facility could grow to focus on the wholesale of a diverse array of common New York species (see Table 3) with a small, public retail section for bait, kelp-based fertilizer, and other value-added seafood items that could result from wholesale processing and private market innovation.

Processing of fish fillets would be done manually, with a possible provision for the automation of scup processing, mirroring industry suggestions. Large-scale scup processing could open avenues for larger-scale wholesale buyers, such as school districts, to purchase processed fillets. The facility could serve as a central cold storage and active freezing hub for high-volume fisheries that still exist on Long Island, such as those for scup, to stabilize prices and availability. This facility, like others, would require truck and van access, as well as a small fleet of vans or trucks, to distribute products locally. Such vehicle access could easily be accommodated in the Calverton industrial park.

Continued expansion of the facility, such as upgrading from manual to automation processing, would create economies of scale and increase brand recognition for New York seafood through increased marketing capacity and expanded seafood packaging capabilities.

Alternative 1: *Different Location* – Montauk

Montauk Fish Dock and Inlet Seafood support commercial fishing in Montauk with dockside facilities. Establishing a new processing facility at this location would eliminate the need to ship seafood from Montauk, thereby reducing this expense at Long Island's most active landing port. The existing support infrastructure at Bob Gosman Co. was sold and is being shut down, as the new owners are not interested in maintaining its commercial fishing support operations. Replacing the existing infrastructure at Montauk would continue to fill the niche it currently serves - as a pack-out dock, dealer, and seafood market. However, this alternative would likely only benefit Montauk industry members and require other growers and fishermen to ship their seafood to Montauk, which is not ideal. This alternative may be better suited as an additional investment to Facility #1.

Alternative 2: *Different Locations* – Hamlet of Yaphank, Town of Islip, Town of Babylon

During the study, some industry members indicated that light industry zones in the hamlets and towns listed above could be good alternative spots for a processing facility. Unfortunately, on Long Island, the distance between available seafood workers and seafood customers is inverse to the distance from the docks and farms – as one goes further west, the population grows, but Long Island’s largest ports and most farms are on the East End. Despite these workforce and delivery challenges, these locations generally have industrial zones that can accommodate seafood processing, limit residential complaints, and, in the right locations, offer access to the Long Island Expressway. They are also located (particularly the towns of Islip and Babylon) mid-way on the island between our East End ports and New York City.

Alternative 3: Instead of capital funding for a new building, support could be provided to processors to expand in ways that meet industry needs, such as purchasing processing equipment, freezers, and refrigerated transport vehicles. This would be similar to Alternative 1, except that funds could be awarded to interested industry members with developed business plans and concepts across the island through a grant program, similar to the Aquaculture Infrastructure Grant Program.

Possible Owners or Operators: Similar to the Portland Fish Exchange, this facility would likely require state support to overcome upfront capital investment costs and keep operational costs in check. An established facility could eventually be sold to a larger seafood firm. Alternatively, this may be an opportunity for fish market owners interested in taking over operations to expand their business.

Conclusions and Next Steps

New York's seafood industry requires support to ensure its continued existence and growth. Nearby states in the Northeast have created much friendlier economic and logistical climates for their commercial fishing and shellfish aquaculture industries to flourish and grow. It is evident that the commercial fishing industry is now facing a pivotal period.

The existing limited infrastructure and dockside access are being sold to suit residential, tourism, and hospitality interests. However, commercial fishing provides an external benefit to all Long Islanders, which shores up the quality of life on Long Island and in New York. Economic and policy support is needed to secure a reliable supply chain for local seafood and to protect New York's maritime heritage.

The authors of this study recognize that the environment, technologies, markets, and processing capacities within the seafood industry will continue to evolve. Climate change is already affecting the species available to New York fishermen, and water quality will continue to pose challenges to marine aquaculture. These concerns are captured and built within the study's list of recommended actions.

Figure 5 (page 32) provides a work plan for near-term and long term actions. The steps are arranged in order from the most pressing and immediate needs of the industry to future growth initiatives.

Prioritization of Actions: 1 of 3

Infrastructure

SUPPORT ACTIONS

1 Working Waterfront and Dock Repairs

- All commercial docks in Shinnecock, Montauk, Mattituck, etc. assessed and repaired
- Re-establish pack-out dock and service at Shinnecock
- Establish pack-out capabilities for kelp and shellfish harvest

2 Establishment of Facility #1 Montauk Ice and Cold Storage

- Include ice receiving, storage, and pumping infrastructure at Shinnecock

Policy Action

1 Protect and Reserve Working Waterfronts

- Coordination with Suffolk County

2 NY Seafood Marketing

- Statewide initiatives to:
  - Promote New York grown and fished seafood
  - Garner public support for working waterfront
  - Provide education and outreach about New York seafood

Prioritization of Actions: 2 of 3

Infrastructure

3 **Establishment of Facility #2**

NY Seafood Community Kitchen

- Located in Riverhead
- Include umbrella permits for industry members to work out of this kitchen

GROWTH ACTIONS

Policy Action

3 **Eliminate Fuel Tax for Fishermen**

4 **Re-imagine Policies, Licenses, and Permits**

- Work with industry to:
  - Reduce paperwork
  - Re-create trip limits and other fishery regulations to reduce market flooding
  - Increase permit accessibility
  - Streamline reporting

5 **Increase NY's Fishing Quotas**

- Continue to work with fishery management councils and state legislative bodies to increase New York's quota allocations of important fishery species - i.e. summer flounder

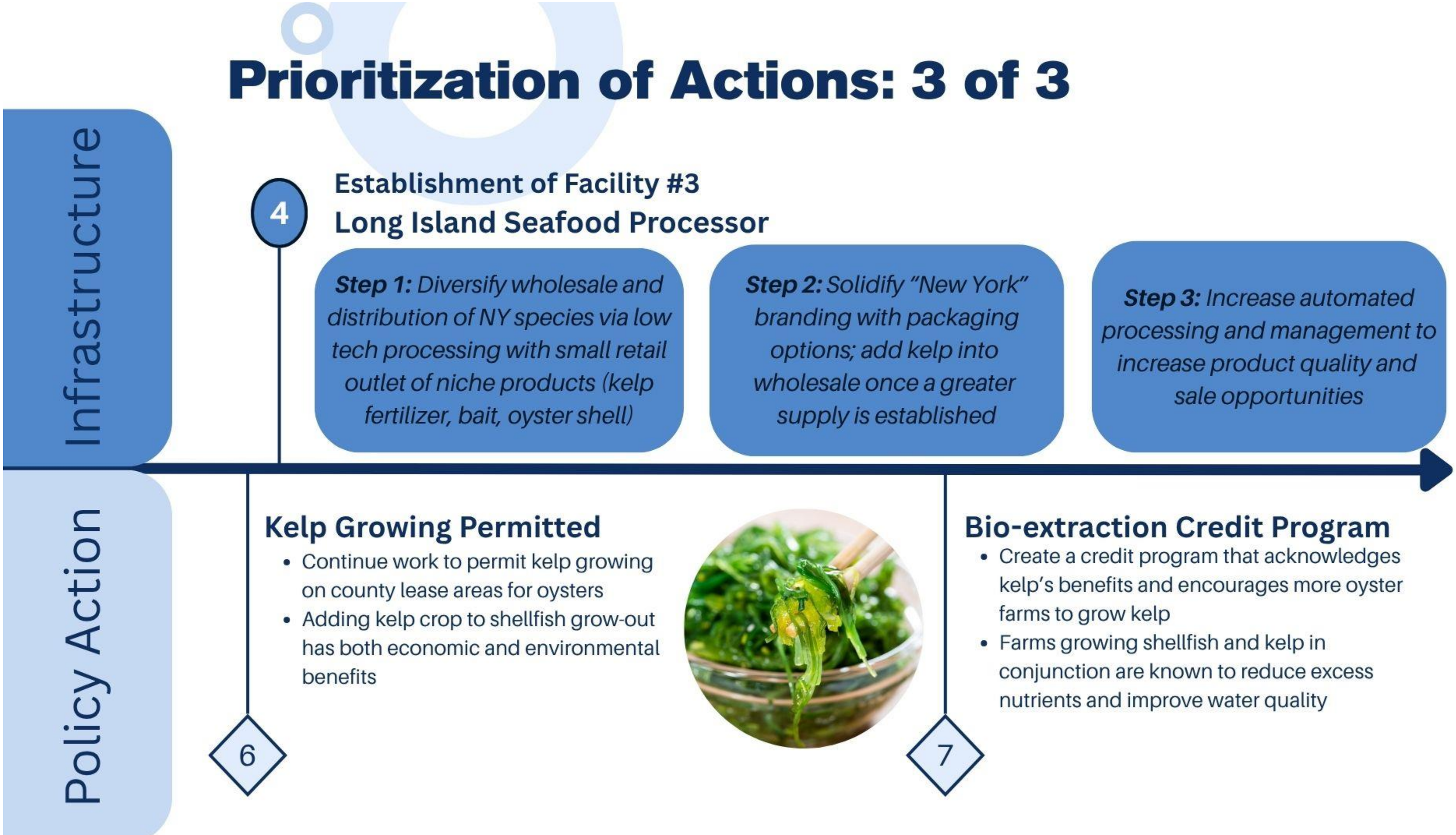

Figure 5: A timeline of actions in order of greatest need to industry expansion and incentives. Items listed on the timeline have been discussed in detail in this document and/or in the Appendix.

Endnotes

1. New York State, (2024), “Governor Hochul Announces Initiatives to Strengthen and Promote New York’s Agricultural Industry”, News, Website.

2. Results and data from NOAA, (2025), Fisheries One Stop Shop (FOSS): NOAA Fisheries: Landings & Fisheries Economics Databases. Data is not adjusted for inflation.

3. The East Hampton Star, (2024). “Gosman’s Goes for $34.4 Mil”, News Website. https://www.easthamptonstar.com/villages/2024125/gosmans-goes-344-mil

4. Dauman, A., et al., (2024), The Monkfish Fishery Marketing Analysis for the Northeast U.S., Report, Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program, NOAA.

5. Halcrow. (2010). New Fulton Fish Market at Hunts Point Frozen Storage and Fish Processing Study Market Assessment Report. DRAFT Report.

6. The Suffolk Times. (2025). “County calls on waterfront business owners for input”, News, Website, https://suffolktimes.timesreview.com/2025/04/county-calls-on-waterfront-business-owners-for-input/

7. New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, (2024), New York State Seafood Interagency Workgroup Report 2024, Report.

8. NOAA, 2024, Fisheries of the United States 2022, U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA.

9. New York State, (2025), “Governor Hochul launches First Long Island Seafood Cuisine Trail”, News, Webpage.

10. New York State, (2025), 2025 State of the State Book. Governor Kathy Hochul. Digital book.

11. New York State, (2023), *No. 32: Establishing State Agency Food Purchasing Goals for New York State Agricultural Products, Executive Order*, Governor Kathy Hochul.

12. New York Sea Grant, (2024), New York Sea Grant College Program 2024-2027 Strategic Plan.

13. Ali, S., et al., (2021), Food-Forward NYC: A 10-Year Food Policy Plan, New York, The City of New York.

14. The White House (2025), “President Donald J. Trump Restores American Seafood Competitiveness”, Fact Sheet, Webpage.

15. The other reports cited here are: Claggett Wolfe Associates, (2002), Market Feasibility Study for Food Marketing Facilities in Eastern Long Island, Long Island Market Authority c/o Suffolk County Executive’s Office, Happauge, NY; Committee on Natural Resources, (2015), “Restoring Atlantic Fisheries and Protecting the Regional Seafood Economy” Testimony by B. Brady, Executive Director of Long Island Commercial Fishing Association, Oversight Hearing, meeting, Riverhead, NY; Lapointe, G. (2019). New York Marine Fisheries Licensing Review, George Lapointe Consulting LLC. For New York State Department Of Environmental Conservation Division of Marine Resources; Forbes, E., (2021), New York Aquaculture Needs Assessment Report 2021, Report, New York Sea Grant; Ciaramella, M., et al., (2022), New York Aquaculture Industry: Status, Updates and Opportunities, Report, Stony Brook; New York Sea Grant; and Ciaramella, M., et al., (2022), New York Commercial Fishing 2021 Survey Report, Report, New York Sea Grant.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
FISHERIES
EDUCATION | RESEARCH | SEAFOOD