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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4602

September 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer:

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused great uncertainty and significant loss of revenue for the aquaculture and seafood industries. As you continue to negotiate further relief for the American people, I urge you to consider the needs of the aquaculture and seafood industries in any upcoming legislative package.

Virginia leads the nation for hard clam production, and the Eastern Shore spearheads the industry. Shellfish growers make up more than 80% of Virginia's aquaculture industry and face unique barriers since most of their products are sold in restaurants rather than grocery stores. As a result, shellfish growers have faced and will continue to experience exceptionally high losses. This issue impacts hardworking watermen, small businesses, restaurants, and wholesale distributors. As the Representative of Coastal Virginia, many constituents shared with me the pandemic's impact on their livelihood and their need for support.

I was pleased that the CARES Act included \$300 million for federal fisheries disaster funds, of which the Commonwealth received \$4.5 million. Unfortunately, this emergency funding was inadequate to meet the need. During the pandemic, a survey of 466 participants found that the average loss of revenue for Virginia [fisheries participants was \\$33,000](#). If every participant received an equal share of the amount allocated, each would receive only \$9,700 in assistance. This amount falls far short of the relief needed to keep these fishery industry participants solvent during this economic crisis. I am confident this situation is not unique to Virginia.

As our nation faces an unprecedented public health and economic crisis, I am deeply appreciative of the work you have done to provide relief to the American people. However, we can and must do more to support economic recovery. As you negotiate the next COVID-19 relief

package, I urge you to include additional and robust funding for the aquaculture and seafood industries. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Elaine G. Luria". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress