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**National Sea Grant Law Center awarded over \$300k to lead 2 major aquaculture projects, partner on 1 more**

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The National Sea Grant Program recently awarded \$16 million for 42 research projects nationwide for collaborative aquaculture projects. The National Sea Grant Law Center (NSGLC) will lead two of the new aquaculture initiatives and contribute to one additional project aimed at advancing sustainable aquaculture in the United States. The 42 projects were chosen from among 136 proposals requesting more than \$52 million in federal funds. The awards require a 50 percent match of non-federal funds.

The U.S. imports 85 percent of its seafood, leading to a \$14 billion trade deficit. To meet growing consumer demand for seafood, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its Sea Grant partners aim to develop the growth of U.S. aquaculture in properly regulated and sustainable ways.

The two projects that will be led by NSGLC are:

- Development of a model law, regulation, or guidance document for use by states for the sale of seaweed in its whole form as a food. The National Sea Grant Law Center will lead the project, supported by \$212,977 in federal funds, and will partner with Connecticut Sea Grant. The project seeks to overcome a main obstacle to the expansion of the seaweed industry in the United States: the lack of a federal framework for its regulation as a food source in its whole form. Without this framework, states are unsure how to structure regulations for this emerging industry, impeding the growth of this potentially important food source.
- Improvement in the understanding of the property-related legal barriers to the development of offshore aquaculture in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the identification of potential approaches to help overcome those legal barriers. A lack of a comprehensive federal framework for the long-term authorization of offshore aquaculture operations, including the right to physically occupy space, is a significant barrier to the expansion of aquaculture offshore into federal waters of the U.S. EEZ. The NSGLC will assess the current state of the debate regarding security of tenure for offshore aquaculture operations in the U.S. EEZ and convene a collaborative learning workshop to engage stakeholders in discussions of policy preferences, legal frameworks, and needs associated with providing security of tenure for offshore aquaculture. The National Sea Grant Law Center will receive \$97,129 in federal funds for the project.

The project that NSGLC will contribute to is:

- Establishment of a National Sea Grant Seaweed Hub with \$1.1 million in federal funds. The hub will serve as a central clearinghouse for science-based, practical resources about seaweed aquaculture research and extension efforts. The hub will provide information for planning and outreach efforts for federal and state agencies as well as seaweed growers and other stakeholders in both the culinary and non-food sectors. This project is led by Aquaculture Extension Specialist and Extension Educator Anoushka Concepcion, Connecticut Sea Grant.

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