

Dear NRAC BOD, TIAC, and Interested Parties,

Please see the note below from Gary Jensen regarding the 2012 budget allocations from the House Ag Appropriations Committee. As you will see we are on-track for a \$628,000 reduction which is a 66% reduction from what the original authorization language for the RACs was set at and approximately a 19% reduction in our FY2011 budget. I am writing to you to appeal to both your house and senate representatives to, at a minimum, reinstate what the President has proposed.

It is important to note that with the loss of specific funding (i.e., earmarks) a significant amount of funding for aquaculture research and demonstration has been lost. The RACs are the only real line-item aquaculture budget item within USDA. These actions can and will severely hamper the growth and success of aquaculture and will only continue to expand our long-term trade deficit because of the lack of research to help increase domestic seafood production.

This action by Congress is a serious matter and will have long-term implications on our development of a safe, productive, and environmentally compatible aquaculture industry in the Northeast and the rest of the country. Please take the time to contact your representatives and explain the value of our RAC efforts in the Northeast and nationally.

Please let our office know if you need any information to help you in this important effort.

Sincerely,

Reginal M. Harrell
NRAC Director

May 26, 2011

TO: RAC Directors

Please note that the House Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee this week recommended \$3,300,000 in funding for aquaculture grants (715 U.S.C. 3322) for fiscal year 2012. This is a reduction of \$628,000 from the President's proposed FY 2012 budget and a reduction of \$620,000 from the current FY2011 budget.

This draft legislation starts the budgetary process for FY2012 spending. Unless there is strong support from the Senate Agricultural Appropriations Subcommittee we could experience a serious cutback of funding that further threatens the near-term future of this program. Also, please realize that the Aquaculture Centers need to be reauthorized in the next Farm Bill. It is my hope that the Administration and Congress will continue to support this reauthorization. If there was a time for some proactive and bold steps, that time has arrived. You may wish to communicate these developments to any interested parties.

Regards,
Gary Jensen

National Program Leader, Aquaculture
USDA/NIFA/PAS