

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AQUARIUM, SANTA MONICA SEAFOOD PARTNER TO PROMOTE SHIFT TO SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD

Southwest's leading distributor will encourage chefs, clients to switch

The Monterey Bay Aquarium and Santa Monica Seafood, the largest seafood distributor in the southwest and an emerging national leader in sustainability, have entered into a five-year partnership under which Santa Monica Seafood will shift its purchases toward sustainable sources.

Under the agreement announced today (Tuesday, October 20), the aquarium's respected Seafood Watch program will support Santa Monica Seafood in a stepped-up outreach effort to its 1,500 client chefs and restaurants. Seafood Watch staff will also help Santa Monica Seafood find suppliers who share a philosophy of sustainability, and provide scientific support and educational materials to assist the company in its efforts.

"We're delighted to partner with Santa Monica Seafood and to help the company fulfill its commitment to get more chefs to purchase seafood from sustainable wild and farmed sources," said Ed Cassano, senior director of the aquarium's Seafood Watch program. "This decision by Santa Monica Seafood, and similar commitments by other business leaders, will have a real impact in the marketplace – and ultimately, on the water. Creating more demand for seafood from sources that support healthy oceans puts us on course to improving fishing practices around the world."

"Ultimately, our goal is to reach a point where a majority of all our seafood purchases come from sustainable sources," said Michael Cigliano, executive vice president of Santa Monica Seafood, a family owned company with roots in L.A. that date to the 19th century. "As a leader in our industry, our company's philosophy is to be in the forefront of preservation and aquaculture efforts to ensure the bounty of our seas for generations to come."

Santa Monica Seafood (www.smseafood.com) is a private, family-owned and operated specialty wholesale distributor of fresh and frozen seafood that has been supplying quality seafood for over 70 years. Its corporate offices and processing facility are located in Rancho Dominguez, California. The company serves approximately 1,500 wholesale customers, primarily white-

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tablecloth restaurants, multi-unit chain restaurants, casinos, hotels and resorts, throughout southern California, and the greater Las Vegas and Phoenix markets.

Since 1999, the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Seafood Watch program has made recommendations – based on sound fisheries science – about which seafood to buy and which to avoid, with the ultimate goal of transforming the seafood market and creating incentives that protect the health of ocean wildlife and ecosystems.

The aquarium’s Seafood Watch team will provide Santa Monica Seafood with scientific information and educational materials to help the company increase its purchases of sustainably wild-caught and farmed seafood.

“Our participation with the Monterey Bay Aquarium demonstrates our on-going commitment to be proactive and deliberate in selecting the better players in every fishery so we can offer our customers choices which are certified sustainable or, lacking that, are at the very least on the path toward sustainability,” Cigliano said. “We will seek out suppliers who share our philosophy of sustainability and preferentially support them with our purchases.”

In recent years, Monterey Bay Aquarium and other members of the Conservation Alliance for Seafood Solutions (www.solutionsforseafood.org/) have announced partnership agreements with a number of major retailers and food service companies to support the shift to sustainable seafood, including Walmart, Compass Group, ARAMARK and Wegmans.

Internationally, the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC, www.msc.org) recognizes – via a certification program – well-managed fisheries and encourages consumers to select seafood products bearing the MSC seal of approval.

“The future of seafood, and the fate of ocean wildlife, is an urgent environmental issue,” Cassano said. “Globally, the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization reports that the majority of all commercial fisheries are being fished at or beyond their limits. However, as a recent report in Science shows, we can turn the tide by engaging a suite of conservation initiatives and connecting these actions to business commitments and consumer action”

“By engaging with partners like Santa Monica Seafood, we’re moving closer to a solution,” he said.

In 2009, the Monterey Bay Aquarium celebrates 25 years of inspiring ocean conservation.