

RE-2 Employee Post Travel Disclosure of Travel Expenses

RECEIVED
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SECRETARY OF THE SENATE
PUBLIC RECORDS

09/08/2025

2025 SEP -9 AM 11:40

Post Travel Filing Instructions: Complete this form within **30 days** of returning from travel. Submit all forms to the Office of Public Records in 144 Hart Building. **This form is a public disclosure. The form and all attachments will be made publicly available.**

Certification: In compliance with the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel, Senate Rule 35, and the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, I certify that I accepted the following gift of privately sponsored travel:

Private Sponsor(s):
Environmental Defense Fund

Travel Dates:
08/03/2025 to 08/09/2025

Name of accompanying family member (if any):

Relationship to Traveler:

Expenses

Transportation Expenses	Lodging Expenses	Meals Expenses	Other Expenses (Amount & Description)
\$2,421.60	\$1,105.00	\$590.43	\$280.00

I also certify that attached to this form are all required documents for post travel disclosure, including:

- The final **Employee Pre-Travel Authorization** (Form RE-1)
- The final **Private Sponsor Travel Certification Form** with all attachments
- The final invitation
- The final approved itinerary

Finally, I certify that all trip information reflected in the attachments above accurately reflects the travel that I accepted. If there were any changes to the trip after I received approval from the Committee, the changes are described in ATTACHMENT 1.

09/08/2025

Date

Matthew Sheffield

Printed Name of Traveler



Signature of Traveler

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

I have made a determination that the expenses set out above in connections with travel described in the Employee Pre-Travel Authorization form, are necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses as defined in Rule 35.

9/9/2025

Date



Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

ATTACHMENT 1 – CHANGES FROM APPROVED PRE-TRAVEL

Note: Material changes to a trip that occur after the Committee has issued an approval letter may invalidate the Committee's approval. Please contact the Committee with any questions regarding changes to an approved trip.

Were there any changes to the pre-approved travel expenses? (Transportation, Meals, Lodging, Other)?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Expense Change	Revised Amount	Explanation
Misc. Expenses	\$195.03	Total for the boat rental was less expensive than originally quoted.
Transportation	\$2,421.60	Matt changed his flight on the last day, which resulted in a more expensive ticket - \$275 increase Bus total for all participants was \$460.13 - \$20.13 increase from \$440 Transportation to and from airports was \$54.66 - \$95.34 decrease Checked bag fee x2 \$40
Meals	\$590.43	8/3 - no meal bought 8/4 - breakfast - 15.57, lunch - 21.43, dinner - 90.17 8/5 - breakfast - 5.53, lunch - 15, dinner - 176 8/6 - breakfast - 20.70, lunch - 17.02, dinner - 92.50 8/7 - breakfast - 18.51, lunch - 43.78, dinner - 74.22 8/8 - no meal bought

Were there any changes to the pre-approved itinerary?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Explanation: Matt booked a later flight returning to DC, resulting in a changed itinerary.

Were there any additional changes to the pre-approved trip?

Yes ☐ No ☒

Explanation: There were no additional changes to the pre-approved trip.



May 22, 2025

Dear Friend,

We invite you to join us and your fellow congressional staff colleagues from August 3-8, 2025, on the islands of Hawai'i and Oahu for an educational fact-finding visit to explore U.S. open ocean aquaculture and sustainable seafood production. This immersive trip will provide you the opportunity to explore and examine the operation of responsibly managed open ocean aquaculture farms, partnerships between government agencies, civil society, private industry, and local communities, and the associated environmental safeguards and economic opportunities.

Over six days and five nights, attendees will take part in site tours, attend briefings from state and federal officials, industry representatives, and local organizations, and have opportunities for discussion with their fellow congressional staff. The delegation will visit sites on the Big Island of Hawai'i and Oahu, including Blue Ocean Mariculture (BOM) – the nation's only commercial open ocean finfish aquaculture facility – as well as NOAA's Inouye Regional Center, Ocean Era's Research Facility, and the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority. Participants will engage directly with industry experts, scientists, NOAA officials, and state agency representatives, and will learn about traditional Native Hawaiian fishponds and the history of Indigenous aquaculture practices.

EDF will cover all transportation, lodging, and meals associated with the official visit.

Please RSVP to Katie Roback as soon as possible, as space is limited and ethics forms must be submitted at least 30 days in advance. If you encounter any issues with the RSVP form, contact Katie at kroback@edf.org.

This trip is being organized in compliance with House and Senate ethics rules, and we will provide a full agenda for submission to the Ethics Committees.

We hope you'll join us in Hawai'i!

Kind regards,

Environmental Defense Fund

RE-1 Employee Pre-Travel Authorization

Pre-Travel Filing Instructions: Complete and submit this form at least 30 days prior to the travel departure date to the **Select Committee on Ethics in SH-220**. Incomplete and late travel submissions will not be considered or approved.

Date/Time Stamp

7/15/2025
4:46PMName of Traveler:
Matthew SheffieldEmploying Office/Committee:
MARKEY, EDWARDPrivate Sponsor(s):
Environmental Defense FundDestination(s):
Kona, Hawaii Honolulu, HawaiiTravel Dates:
08/03/2025 to 08/09/2025

NOTE: If you plan to extend the trip for any reason you **must** notify the Committee.

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties.

This trip directly implicates policy issues I cover for the Senator's office, specifically aquaculture and fisheries policy.

Do you have an accompanying family member or spouse on this trip?
NoName and Relationship to Traveler:
N/A

I certify that the information contained in this form is true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge.

7/15/2025

Date



Signature of Employee

TO BE COMPLETED BY SUPERVISING MEMBER/OFFICER

(President of the Senate, Secretary of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms,
Secretary for the Majority, Secretary for the Minority, and Chaplain)

Senator Edward Markey

hereby authorize

Matthew Sheffield

(Print Senator's/Officer's Name)

(Print Traveler's Name)

an employee under my direct supervision, to accept payment or reimbursement for necessary transportation, lodging, and related expenses for travel to the event described above. I have determined that this travel is in connection with his or her duties as a Senate employee or an officeholder, and will not create the appearance that he or she is using public office for private gain.

I have also determined that the attendance of the employee's spouse or child is appropriate to assist in the representation of the Senate.

☐ (signify "yes" by checking box)

7/15/2025

Date



Signature of Supervising Senator/Officer

Environmental Defense Fund: EDF Aquaculture Congressional Fact-Finding Trip to Hawai'i

Matthew Sheffield

Title:
Knauss Fellow

Employing Office/Committee:
MARKEY, EDWARD

Duty Station:
None

Destination(s):
Kona, Hawaii
Honolulu, Hawaii

Explain how this trip is specifically connected to the traveler's official or representational duties:

This trip directly implicates policy issues I cover for the Senator's office, specifically aquaculture and fisheries policy.

Name of accompanying family member (if any):
Not Entered

Name and Relationship to Traveler:
None

Organization Information

Organization Name
Environmental Defense Fund

Is your organization classified as a §501(c)(3)?
Yes No

§501(c)(3) Organization Type
Public Charity

Address
257 Park Avenue South

Address 2 (Optional)
None

City, State Zip
New York, New York 10010 United States

Phone Number
2125052100

Organization URL
www.edf.org

History of Congressional Travel

EDF sponsored Congressional travel for House staff to Louisiana in May 2023. This is EDF's first time sponsoring Senate travel.

Educational Activities

The Environmental Defense Fund is a nonprofit working to stabilize the climate, strengthen the ability of people and nature to thrive, and support people's health. We focus on science, economic factors, and policy levers to help governments, businesses, and communities implement solutions. We serve as a convener, bringing together stakeholders to identify common goals, finding compromises that support climate action while also staying true to our mission. EDF publishes reports on various climate change issues, hosts educational visits and briefings alongside partner organizations providing decision makers with science and economic information. EDF published a variety of educational materials – including white papers, blogs, fact sheets, and newsletters - for a variety of audiences interested in learning more about our work. EDF speaks at scientific conferences, global cooperation meetings, and host meetings with various stakeholders to inform them of our research and solutions.

Lobbyist and Foreign Agent Registration Information

Lobbyist Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not a federally registered lobbyist and do not retain or employ a federally registered lobbyist.*

Foreign Agent Registration Status: *I certify that the sponsor is not an agent of a foreign principal and do not retain or employ an agent of a foreign principal.*

Foreign Government Involvement

Foreign Agent Registration Status:

I certify that the sponsor is not a foreign government.

I certify that the sponsor is not an entity that is owned or operated by a foreign government.

I certify that the sponsor does not receive funding from a foreign government.

Comments

None Entered

Signature Page

The signature page is below.

Purpose and Details

Provide a brief description of the trip.

EDF is organizing a Congressional staff delegation to Hawai'i, focused on open ocean aquaculture and sustainable seafood production in the U.S. The visit is designed to provide Congressional staff with firsthand experience of aquaculture operations, showcasing innovations, regulatory coordination, environmental considerations, and the broader potential of open ocean aquaculture in U.S. federal waters. The delegation will visit sites on the Big Island and O'ahu, including a full tour of Blue Ocean Mariculture (BOM)—the nation's only commercial open ocean finfish aquaculture facility—as well as research and state-led aquaculture initiatives. Participants will engage directly with industry experts, scientists, NOAA leadership, and state agency representatives. Additionally, showcasing how Hawai'i's state regulatory agencies manage aquaculture in state waters, the state permitting process, and what lessons might be drawn from Hawai'i's approach to inform future federal efforts.

Explain how the purpose of the trip relates to your organization's mission.

Environmental Defense Fund is dedicated to stabilizing the climate, strengthening the resilience of people and nature, and supporting public health by advancing science-based, economically sound, and equitable solutions to environmental challenges. Central to EDF's mission is the commitment to convening diverse stakeholders, fostering collaboration, and educating on potential pathways that balance environmental protection with economic and community well-being. This trip is a direct extension of EDF's mission through advancing climate solutions, promoting science-based solutions, bringing together a nonpartisan contingent of experts, and supporting people and nature.

Is your organization the only sponsor for this trip?

Yes No

Grantmaking Organizations (Optional)

There are no grantmaking organizations.

With or Without Regard for Congressional Participation

The trip is arranged or organized specifically with regard to congressional participation.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Involvement in Planning, Organizing, Requesting or Arranging

The trip will not in any part be planned, organized, requested, or arranged by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal, other than de minimis involvement.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Financing

The trip will not be financed in any part by a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal.

No funds or in-kind contributions were earmarked directly or indirectly for the purpose of financing this specific trip from a registered lobbyist or agent of a foreign principal or from a private entity that retains or employs one or more registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal.

Lobbyist/Foreign Agent Accompaniment

Complete if all sponsors are §501(c)(3) organizations

The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Complete if any of the sponsors is not a §501(c)(3) organizations.

The trip is limited to three days (for trips inside the continental United States) or seven days (for trips outside the continental United States), and no lobbyist or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee at any point throughout the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and one overnight stay) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

The trip is limited to a one-day event (exclusive of travel time and two overnight stays) and no registered lobbyists or agents of a foreign principal will accompany the Member, officer, or employee on any segment of the trip

Certification of No Recreational Activity and No Alcohol

Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for recreational activities.

Travel expenses paid for will not include expenditures for alcohol, except as permitted by the Regulations Governing Privately Sponsored Travel.

Invitees

Members and staff from the House of Representatives **will** receive invitations.

The list of invitees is below.

Travel Details

Trip Start Date/Time:
08/03/2025 @ 07:29 AM

Trip End Date/Time:
08/09/2025 @ 12:45 AM

Will the traveler be accompanied by a family member for whom the sponsor will pay travel expenses?

Yes No

Itinerary

The itinerary is below.

Transportation (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$2,141.81 | Accompanying Family Member: \$0.00)

Transportation Type	Class	Amount
Airfare	Coach	\$1,551.81
Note Flights from Washington, DC to Kona, HI, Kona, HI to Honolulu, HI, Honolulu to Washington, DC.		
Ground Transportation	N/A	\$440.00
Note Shuttle bus on both islands		
Ground Transportation	N/A	\$150.00
Note Transportation to airport in DC, from airport to hotel in Kona, from hotel to airport in Honolulu		

Lodging (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$1,105.00)

Check-In	Check-Out	Facility	City	State	Country	Nights	Cost/Night	Cost Exceed Per Diem
08/03/2025	08/06/2025	Waikoloa Beach Marriot	Kona	Hawaii	United States	3	\$229.00	No
08/06/2025	08/08/2025	AC Hotel Honolulu	Honolulu	Hawaii	United States	2	\$209.00	Yes

Cost Exceeds Per Diem Reason

This rate goes over the governmental per diem by \$7, this was the least expensive in the area.

Meals (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$800.00)

Date	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidentals	Total	City	State	Country	Cost Exceeds Per Diem
08/03/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$102.00	\$0.00	\$102.00	Kona	Hawaii	United States	No
08/04/2025	\$27.00	\$41.00	\$68.00	\$0.00	\$136.00	Kona	Hawaii	United States	No
08/05/2025	\$27.00	\$41.00	\$150.00	\$0.00	\$218.00	Kona	Hawaii	United States	Yes

Cost Exceeds Per Diem Reason

Travelers during the day will get a tour of the net pen facilities and better understand the facilities workings by being able to sample the products at the dinner. The fair market value of these products exceeds the per diem. Dinner will feature dishes prepared with Blue Ocean's Hawaiian Kanpachi and seaweed cultivated by Ocean Era. This meal offers a unique opportunity for participants to taste the locally produced seafood they learned about during the tours. Chef Jayson Kanekoa will share the significance of these products in Hawaii's culinary landscape and discuss how the growth of aquaculture, alongside the traditional loko i'a, has expanded sourcing options for chefs and supported a more resilient, sustainable local food system.

08/06/2025	\$25.00	\$37.00	\$63.00	\$0.00	\$125.00	Honolulu	Hawaii	United States	No
08/07/2025	\$25.00	\$37.00	\$63.00	\$0.00	\$125.00	Honolulu	Hawaii	United States	No
08/08/2025	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$94.00	\$0.00	\$94.00	Honolulu	Hawaii	United States	No

Reasonable Miscellaneous Expenses (Per Member/Officer/Employee: \$280.00)

Expense Type	Amount	Notes
Other (Boat tour)	\$280.00	Participants will take a boat tour of Blue Ocean's submerged net pens, located offshore in state waters to observe firsthand how commercial open ocean aquaculture operates in practice. This tour, led by BOM's VP of Marine Operations, will showcase daily farm operations, including fish health monitoring, feeding systems, and environmental safeguards designed to minimize impacts on the surrounding marine environment. Using an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) camera, participants will view the net pens below the water's surface and gain a deeper understanding of the infrastructure and conditions in which the fish are raised. The tour will also include a visit to a neighboring coral reef, where BOM staff will discuss how aquaculture farms interact with marine ecosystems and the steps being taken to ensure environmental protections and long-term ocean health.

Additional Attachments

Document Name
There are no additional attachments.

PRIVATELY SPONSORED TRAVEL

SPONSOR SIGNATURE PAGE

I hereby certify that the information submitted in connection with the trip listed below is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Trip Name: EDF Aquaculture Congressional Fact-Finding Trip to Hawaii
Travel Date(s): 8/3/2025 to 8/8/2025
Travel Destination(s): Kona, Hawaii and Honolulu, Hawaii
Sponsor: Environmental Defense Fund

Angela Churie Kallhauge

(printed name of sponsor representative)

EVP, Impact

(title)



Digitally signed by Angela Churie Kallhauge
Date: 2025.06.26 16:13:46 -05'00'

(signature of sponsor representative)

June 26, 2025

(date)



List of Senate Employees Invited

James Chang, Policy Advisor to Senator Brian Schatz.

Chang leads ocean, coastal, and aquaculture policy for the Senator, who has been active on ocean and coastal issues and represents Hawaii, a coastal state. The Senator is also a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Nicole Teutschel, Minority Senior Policy Advisor for the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Subcommittee on Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries.

Teutschel oversees ocean and coastal issues and is the lead minority staffer for the Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Daniel Hillenbrand, Legislative Director to Senator Roger Wicker.

Hillenbrand leads policy and legislative issues for the Senator, who represents Mississippi and has been active on ocean, aquaculture, and fisheries issues. The Senator also serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Alexis Rudd, Majority Policy Director for the Senate Commerce, Science & Transportation Subcommittee on Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries.

Rudd oversees ocean and coastal issues and is the lead majority staffer for the Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Anderson Tran, Counsel to Senator Dan Sullivan.

Tran works on fisheries and ocean issues for the Senator, who represents Alaska and has been active on fisheries issues. The Senator also serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Connie Vo, Knauss Sea Grant Fellow to Senator Dan Sullivan.

Vo is the John A. Knauss Sea Grant Marine Policy Fellow for the Senator and works on oceans, fisheries, and aquaculture issues. The Senator has been active on ocean and fisheries policy and is a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Christina Sandstedt, U.S. Coast Guard Fellow to Senator Roger Wicker.

Sandstedt is the U.S. Coast Guard Fellow to the Senator and works on ocean, coastal, fisheries, and maritime issues. The Senator has been active on aquaculture and fisheries issues and is a member of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Emily Allegrezza, Legislative Assistant to Senator Roger Wicker.

Allegrezza helps lead ocean and maritime issues for the Senator and supervises the Senator's U.S. Coast Guard Fellow. The Senator has been active on aquaculture and fisheries issues and is a member of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Chris Pickens, Majority Aide, Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Subcommittee on Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries

Pickens works on oceans, fisheries, and coastal issues for the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Subcommittee on Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fisheries. The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Marshall Burkhardt, Legislative Aide to Senator Andy Kim.

Burkhardt works on environmental and ocean issues for the Senator. The Senator serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Hannah Vogel, Director of Climate and Environmental Policy for Senator Ed Markey.

Vogel leads environmental and climate issues for Senator Markey. The Senator has been active on ocean and fisheries issues and serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Tim Kocher, Former Legislative Assistant to Senator Ted Cruz.

Kocher is the former Legislative Assistant to the Senator, who is Chair of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters. Upon extending the invitation, we were informed that Kocher is no longer employed with Senator Cruz.

Jack Heekin, Former Deputy Chief of Staff and General Counsel Senator Rick Scott.

Heekin is the former Deputy Chief of Staff and General Counsel to the Senator. The Senator has been active on ocean and coastal issues. Upon extending the invitation, we were informed that Heekin is no longer employed with Senator Scott.

Thomas Liepold, Minority Professional Staff Member for the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee.

Liepold works on agriculture and aquaculture issues for the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and Senator Klobuchar, who is the Ranking Member of the Committee. The Senator has been active on aquaculture issues because of aquaculture's feed components and its connection to domestic agriculture issues.

Matt Sheffield, Knauss Sea Grant Fellow to Senator Ed Markey.

Sheffield is the John A. Knauss Sea Grant Marine Policy Fellow to the Senator and works on ocean, fisheries, and coastal issues. The Senator has been active on these issues and also serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Wayne Wickman, Legislative Correspondent to Senator Ted Cruz.

Wickman is the Legislative Correspondent to the Senator and works on ocean and coastal issues. The Senator is the Chair of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Katie Weissert, Legislative Director to Senator Rick Scott.

Weissert leads policy and legislative issues to the Senator, who represents coastal Florida. The Senator has been active on ocean, coastal, and fisheries issues.

Nathan Robinson, Legislative Aide to Senator Lisa Blunt Rochester.

Robinson works on environmental and ocean issues for the Senator. The Senator serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

Carina Fish, Legislative Assistant to Senator Ed Markey.

Fish works on environmental and ocean issues for the Senator and supervises the John A. Knauss Sea Grant Marine Policy Fellow. The Senator has been active on ocean and coastal policy and serves on the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over open ocean aquaculture in federal waters.

AGENDA | EDF CONGRESSIONAL STAFF DELEGATION TO HAWAI'I FOR AQUACULTURE FACT-FINDING VISIT

August 3-8, 2025

Purpose: Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is organizing a Congressional staff delegation to Hawaii, focused on open ocean aquaculture and sustainable seafood production in the U.S. The visit is designed to provide Congressional staff with firsthand experience of aquaculture operations, showcasing innovations, regulatory coordination, environmental considerations, and the broader potential of open ocean aquaculture in U.S. federal waters.

EDF will cover all travel and accommodation expenses, consistent with all House and Senate Ethics Committee rules.

Sunday, August 3, 2025 | Travel

Attire: Casual

7:29 AM EST – 2:27 PM HST Travel to Kona, Hawai'i (KOA)

4:00 PM – 10:00 PM Travel to Hotel/Check-in at Hotel

The Waikoloa Beach Marriott (69-275 Waikōloa Beach
Dr, Waikoloa Village, HI 96738)

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM Welcome dinner (Business casual)

Monday, August 4 | Day 1: Kona

Attire: Casual

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM Breakfast at the hotel

8:30 AM – 9:00 AM Travel to the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaii Authority
(NELHA)

9:15 AM – 10:00 AM Orientation meeting at NELHA Conference Room

10:30 AM – 12:45 PM **Blue Ocean Mariculture Hatchery and Ocean Era Research
Facility Tour**

Blue Ocean Mariculture: Visit the only commercial open ocean finfish farm in the U.S. for an educational tour led by Blue Ocean Mariculture VP of Hatchery Operations. Participants will be guided through their land-based hatchery facility, where Hawaiian Kanpachi (*Seriola rivoliana*) are bred and raised from broodstock to fingerlings before transfer to offshore pens. The tour will highlight the full hatchery lifecycle, including egg collection, larval

rearing, nursery systems, and feed practices. Staff will share insights into the company's rigorous biosecurity practices, sustainability initiative, and science-based approach to fish health and welfare.

Ocean Era: *Participants will take an educational tour of Ocean Era's land-based research facility to explore cutting-edge aquaculture innovations being developed in Hawai'i. The tour, led by Ocean Era's Chief Operations Officer, will showcase the company's work on seaweed cultivation, integrated multi-trophic aquaculture (IMTA), and trials for new species and sustainable feed alternatives. Ocean Era staff will provide an overview of ongoing research aimed at reducing environmental impacts, improving nutrient cycling, and supporting ecosystem-based approaches to aquaculture. This visit will also highlight the role of research and development in advancing more resilient and climate-smart food production systems in coastal and offshore environments.*

12:30 PM – 2:00 PM Lunch

This working lunch will provide participants with the opportunity to engage with Blue Ocean Mariculture and Ocean Era staff following the morning tours. Conversations will focus on both companies' approach to sustainable aquaculture, including hatchery operations, biosecurity practices, community engagement efforts, and the challenges and opportunities of farming Hawaiian Kanpachi in open ocean waters. Participants will also learn more about how these companies collaborate with local stakeholders and research institutions to support responsible aquaculture development in Hawai'i.

Participants have the opportunity to discuss Blue Ocean Mariculture processes, ideology, community engagement, and more with staff.

2:00 PM – 2:30 PM Travel to the Kīholo Preserve

2:30 PM – 4:00 PM **Kīholo Preserve Tour with The Nature Conservancy**

Tour this culturally and ecologically significant coastal preserve managed by The Nature Conservancy, where participants will learn about ongoing efforts to restore and steward traditional Hawaiian fishponds (loko i'a), which serve as both food sources and living examples of Indigenous aquaculture practices. Staff will also discuss initiatives to protect native species, control invasive species, and monitor coastal water quality in a changing climate and human activity. This tour offers a unique perspective on the intersection of conservation science, cultural heritage, and community-led stewardship in Hawai'i.

4:00 PM – 4:30 PM	Travel to hotel
4:30 PM – 5:30 PM	Break
5:45 PM - 7:30 PM	Walk to dinner at Kuleana (Casual)

Tuesday, August 5 | Day 2: Kona

Attire: Casual-

6:00 AM – 7:30 AM	Breakfast at the hotel
7:45 AM – 8:30 AM	Travel to Jack's Diving Locker at marina for boat tour
9:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Depart from the marina and travel to Blue Ocean Mariculture's (BOM) aquaculture farms
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM	Boat tour of BOM aquaculture net pens and nearby coral reef <i>Participants will take a boat tour of Blue Ocean's submerged net pens, located offshore in state waters to observe firsthand how commercial open ocean aquaculture operates in practice. This tour, led by BOM's VP of Marine Operations, will showcase daily farm operations, including fish health monitoring, feeding systems, and environmental safeguards designed to minimize impacts on the surrounding marine environment. Using an ROV (remotely operated vehicle) camera, participants will view the net pens below the water's surface and gain a deeper understanding of the infrastructure and conditions in which the fish are raised. The tour will also include a visit to a neighboring coral reef, where BOM staff will discuss how aquaculture farms interact with marine ecosystems and the steps being taken to ensure environmental protections and long-term ocean health.</i>
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Lunch on the boat and return to the marina <i>Lunch will be served onboard during the boat tour, offering participants the opportunity to continue the conversation with Blue Ocean Mariculture staff. They'll share additional insights into day-to-day farm operations, ongoing research collaborations, and their approach to environmental monitoring and stewardship. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions about what they observed both at the hatchery and the open net pen operations.</i>
12:30 PM – 1:00 PM	Travel to the hotel
1:00 PM – 2:30 PM	Break
2:30 PM – 4:30 PM	Group reflections and discussion

Participants will gather and discuss their experiences and thoughts during the tour with EDF and BOM staff leading into dinner with BOM, Ocean Era, and Department of Agriculture (State of Hawai'i) staff.

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM Dinner at the hotel, featuring seafood from BOM and Ocean Era with Chef Jayson Kanekoa (Business casual)

Dinner will be held at the Waikoloa Beach Marriott and will feature dishes prepared with Blue Ocean's Hawaiian Kanpachi and seaweed cultivated by Ocean Era. This meal offers a unique opportunity for participants to taste the locally produced seafood they learned about during the tours. Chef Jayson Kanekoa will share the significance of these products in Hawai'i's culinary landscape and discuss how the growth of aquaculture, alongside the traditional loko i'a, has expanded sourcing options for chefs and supported a more resilient, sustainable local food system.

Wednesday, August 6 | Day 3: Honolulu

Attire: Casual

6:30 AM – 7:30 AM Breakfast at the hotel

7:30 AM – 8:00 AM Depart for the airport (KOA)

9:22 AM – 10:12 AM Travel to Honolulu (HNL)
Hawaiian Airlines Flight HA0177

10:45 AM – 11:30 AM Travel to **NOAA's Inouye Regional Center (IRC)**

11:45 AM – 1:15 PM Lunch at IRC

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM Welcome presentation from NOAA leadership

2:45 PM – 3:45 PM Tour of the IRC

Participants will tour NOAA's state-of-the-art research and operations facility in Honolulu that supports the Pacific Ocean research and resource management. The tour will provide insight into NOAA's critical role in monitoring marine ecosystems, managing fisheries, and advancing science-based policies for sustainable aquaculture and ocean conservation. Participants will hear how federal efforts are used to balance ocean use with environmental protection in Hawai'i and the broader Pacific region.

4:00 PM – 5:30 PM Depart and travel to hotel (**AC Hotel Honolulu**), check-in

5:30 PM – 7:00 PM Dinner on your own

Thursday, August 7 | Day 4: Honolulu

Attire: Casual

5:30 AM – 6:00 AM

Depart for the Honolulu Fish Auction

6:00 AM – 7:30 AM

Honolulu Fish Auction Tour with the Hawaii Seafood Council

Participants will tour the nation's only fresh tuna auction, where local fisherman sell their catch directly to buyers. Learn about seafood grading, traceability, and the sustainable longline fishery that supplies much of Hawai'i's Tuna. This visit provides valuable context for understanding how aquaculture products fit into Hawai'i's broader seafood economy and highlights the shared importance of quality standards, market access, and responsible ocean management.

7:45 AM – 9:30 AM

Breakfast at Nico's Restaurant

9:30 AM – 9:45 AM

Travel to Pier 38 NOAA classroom

10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Panel Discussion with aquaculture stakeholders

Participants will engage directly with a diverse panel of stakeholders including industry leaders, community representatives, scientists, and environmental NGOs. The discussion will cover opportunities and challenges for aquaculture in Hawai'i and across the U.S., with a focus on science-based policy, coastal planning, and community engagement. Panelists will include representatives from Hawai'i Sea Grant, Hawai'i's Department of Agriculture, NOAA's Pacific Island Regional Office, and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group.

12:30 PM – 1:00 PM

Travel to hotel

1:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Lunch and break

3:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Closing discussion

To close out the delegation, EDF staff will lead a wrap-up discussion focused on key takeaways from the trip, remaining questions, and opportunities for continued learning and engagement. Participants will reflect on what they've seen and heard – from hatchery operations and open ocean farming practices to traditional loko l'a restoration and research innovations. EDF will facilitate an open conversation on how lessons from Hawai'i may inform future dialogue, decision-making, and potential pathways for responsible aquaculture development nationwide.

5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Dinner (Casual)

Participants will attend a light dinner reflecting on the trip.

Friday, August 8 | Day 5: Travel

7:00 AM HST

Depart Hawai'i on flight to Washington, DC