



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **ROBIN ALDEN, FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PENOBSCOT EAST RESOURCE CENTER NAMED WHITE HOUSE CHAMPION OF CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE SEAFOOD**

**Stonington, ME Wednesday, October 5, 2016** – On Friday, October 7, the White House will recognize Robin Alden, Founding Executive Director of the Penobscot East Resource Center (PERC), Maine’s center for coastal fisheries based in Stonington, Maine as one of a dozen individuals nationwide selected as “White House Champions of Change for Sustainable Seafood.” The event will be live streamed on the White House website at [www.whitehouse.gov/live/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/live/) on Friday, October 7, at 1:00 PM ET. Follow the conversation at #WHChamps.

“This is amazing,” Alden said. “I have spent my entire adult life pursuing this vision and the award is validation for all the fishermen, scientists, regulators, and supporters who have done the hard work of collaborating to make local fisheries sustainable.”

Robin co-founded PERC in 2003 and has led a path-breaking effort to bring the knowledge and expertise of fishermen, scientists, and policy makers together in collaborative shared management of Maine’s coastal fishery from the Penobscot Estuary east to the Canadian Maritimes. Under Robin’s direction, PERC’s innovative approach is recognized internationally as a model for sustainable fisheries.

“Ironically, climate change is helping us all, including state and federal regulators, realize that we need a new and more collaborative approach to managing fisheries, and that that has to involve fishermen – their knowledge and their participation in making tough, informed decisions. This is very long term work of trust-building and social change, collaborative science, and policy innovation.” Alden said. “My goal is to leave Penobscot East Resource Center strong and able to carry the vision forward. We have both an urgent need and an opportunity for this to work as we all face climate change together.”

For more than a dozen years Robin has spearheaded a host of pioneering and collaborative initiatives with the goal of securing fishing forever in Downeast Maine. Notable examples include:

- Community Fisheries Action Roundtable (C-FAR), first convened by PERC in 2008, facilitates shared management by fishermen, scientists, and policy makers. In 2012 C-FAR facilitation helped build the plan that led to the revitalization and reopening of Maine's closed scallop fishery. The fishery, which had seen a decline to less than 300,000 lbs. caught in 2005, has fully rebounded with more than 5,000,000 lbs. caught in 2014.
- Eastern Maine Skippers Program (EMSP) created in 2012 by PERC in collaboration with Maine's Rural Aspirations Project. EMSP educates and mentors more than 100 high school students from Vinalhaven, North Haven, Deer Isle-Stonington, Ellsworth, Mount Desert Island, Narraguagus, and Jonesport-Beals High Schools. The program was a recipient of a Maine Department of Marine Resources Lobster Research & Education Award in 2016.
- Sentinel Survey Fishery, a partially federally funded fishermen/scientist partnership created in 2010 and managed by PERC in collaboration with the University of Maine to collect data needed to develop management policy aimed at rebuilding a viable fishery for cod, haddock and other groundfish in Downeast Maine.

Robin is the former Commissioner of the Maine Department of Marine Resources, responsible for Maine's marine and anadromous fishery management and enforcement and for aquaculture in the state. She was also the publisher and editor of both Commercial Fisheries News and Fish Farming News and a public member of the New England Fishery Management Council. She was co-founder of Maine Fishermen's Forum.

### **About The Champions of Change for Sustainable Seafood**

The Champions of Change program was created as an opportunity for the White House to feature individuals doing extraordinary things to empower and inspire members of their communities.

The United States fishing industry is critical to the economic health and well-being of communities across the country, supporting 1.7 million jobs and contributing nearly \$200 billion to the economy in 2014. However, our marine ecosystems are under threat from multiple stressors, including climate change and ocean acidification. The need for innovation in sustainable fisheries has never been greater. Local leaders serve as the backbone of our communities, working to build resilient coasts and striving to protect the at-risk towns whose future depend on the recovery of our fisheries. The administration applauds the hard work, collaboration and sacrifice by many across the country to become responsible stewards and safeguard our seafood security. These Champions of Change are ensuring the United States is a global leader in sustainable seafood management.

Friday's program will feature remarks by Managing Director of the Council on Environmental Quality Christy Goldfuss, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan, and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Commerce Bruce H. Andrews.

## White House Champions of Change for Sustainable Seafood

- Robin Alden, Founding Executive Director, Penobscot East Resource Center, Stonington, Maine
- Linda Behnken, Executive Director of the Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association, Sitka, Alaska
- Christopher Brown, President of the Rhode Island Commercial Fisherman's Association and owns Brown Family Seafood, Point Judith, Rhode Island
- Jason DeLaCruz, President of Wild Seafood Co., Executive Director of Gulf Wild, and the Vice President of the Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Shareholders' Alliance, Largo, Florida
- Byron Encalade, President of the Louisiana Oysterman Association, Pointe-A-La-Hache, Louisiana
- Monica Jain, founding director of Fish 2.0, Carmel, California
- Bun Lai, owner and chef of Miya's Sushi, Woodbridge, Connecticut
- Alan Lovewell, CEO and Co-founder of Real Good Fish, Moss Landing, California
- Dr. Kevan Main, Senior Scientist and Program Manager at the Mote Marine Laboratory and Aquarium, Sarasota, Florida
- Luka Mossman, Fisheries Outreach Coordinator, Conservation International Hawaii, Hilo, Hawaii
- Brad Pettinger, director of the Oregon Trawl Commission, Brookings, Oregon

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