

# Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy

## 2020 Highlights

The Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy (Alliance) is a responsive network of companies, organizations, and individuals dedicated to a vibrant marine economy for Maine. We leverage the capacity, knowledge, and experiences of the network to benefit the whole. We foster innovation and entrepreneurship with a focus on new technologies, essential infrastructure, and adaptive strategies to pivot in the wake of economic shocks. By bridging the "silos" that exist between marine sectors, we create new collaborations, facilitate learning across the industry, and inspire people to look forward and try new things.

Initially formed in 2016 around a state-sponsored, citizens' marine bond initiative (seven million dollars in public funds administered by Maine Technology Institute, plus more than seven million dollars in initial private investments), the Alliance enabled 17 investments in technology, infrastructure, and workforce development that are transforming Maine's seafood economy (see inside map). Coordinated by Maine Sea Grant, the Alliance helps enable healthy coastal working waterfront communities.

In response to COVID-19 the Alliance hosted a series of virtual discussions *Pandemic Pivot: Innovation and Resilience in Maine's Seafood Community* featuring sixteen speakers from the business sector who shared how COVID-19 has impacted their business and what innovative strategies they are using to adapt to changing markets and consumer needs. To view recordings and learn more, visit the Alliance for Maine's Marine Economy [Virtual Offerings](#) page.

We facilitate new investment in Maine's marine economy. On April 8th, 2020 the U.S. Economic Development Administration [announced it would award two million dollars](#) (matched by \$500,000 of local investments) to Maine to boost the state's marine economy. The Alliance brought together partners and facilitated the development of this successful proposal to create a strategic roadmap for growth and greater resiliency in Maine's marine economy.

The Alliance's investments in infrastructure and innovative technologies have allowed businesses to develop new products, increase revenue, and grow jobs in Maine's coastal communities and economies. Since 2016, 76 new seafood products and services have been created.

Before the pandemic hit, seafood businesses, non-profits, students, Maine's congressional delegation staff, and others came together for a tour of Ready Seafood's state-of-the-art 52,000 square foot lobster processing facility in Saco, Maine on Feb 28, 2020.



NOTE: Photographs of students and others not wearing masks were taken prior to the coronavirus pandemic. The University of Maine and University of Maine at Machias follow federal and state Centers for Disease Control and Prevention health and safety guidance, which includes social distancing and use of face coverings for the start of the 2020–21 academic year.

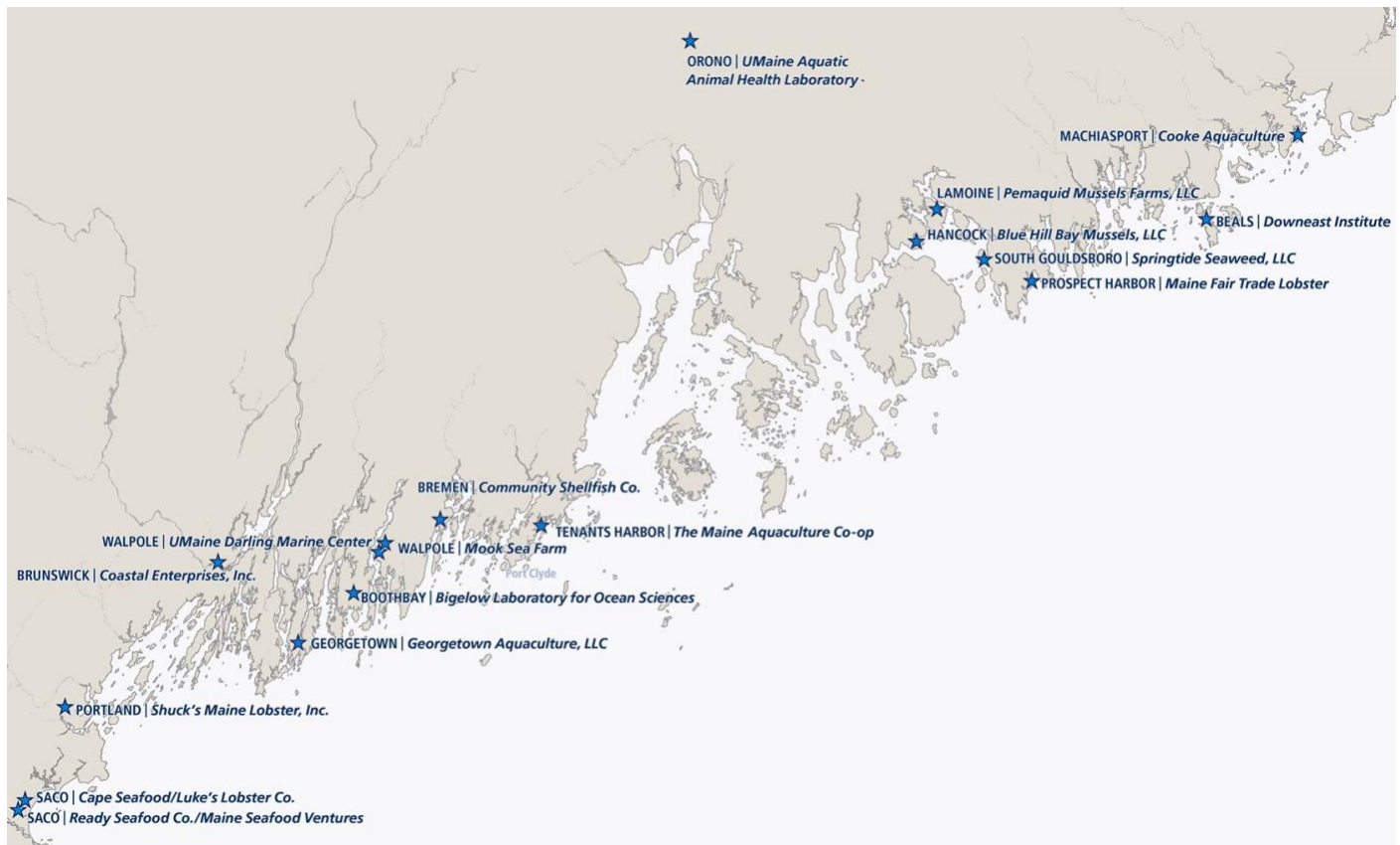
## Alliance-supported investments are allowing innovation and adaptation in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some quotes from people’s whose organizations benefitted from these investments.

“Without this space, we would not have been able to access this new revenue stream as a distributor, which has played a major role in keeping our company solvent during the pandemic, when oyster sales declined. Being able to harvest and ship product the day it is ordered also gives us a competitive advantage” —Bill Mook, Owner, Mook Sea Farm

“This investment was the initial step of getting into the consumer packaged goods (CPG) business. We now have 6 CPG seafood products being distributed nationwide. If we did not have this momentum built into our business pre-COVID, we would be out of the business.” —Luke Holden, Founder & CEO, Luke’s Lobster Co.

“The Alliance investment enhanced our research capacity and helped us create an innovation “hub” for the region. These assets allowed us to continue our research agenda, advance partnerships with businesses, and commercialize our innovations during the pandemic, generating new sources of revenue for our facility as well as our partners.” —Dianne Tilton, Executive Director, Downeast Institute

“Our increased production capacity and efficiency has allowed us to position ourselves to expand markets and develop new value-added processing and survive the pandemic stronger.” —Carter Newell, Founder, Pemaquid Mussel Farm



### Quote from the chair

“Anyone who works on or near the water understands that unexpected storms are business as usual. I think this reason above all others is why so many Alliance members were able to pivot in the middle of the biggest storm many of us have ever faced. Watching members of the Alliance turn these challenges into opportunities in real time has been nothing short of inspiring. Seeing the grit and determination, the creativity and innovation and just the raw persistence required makes me proud to be a member of the Alliance. It has been an honor to work with you this year as Chair of the Alliance and I look forward to all that lies ahead for our group in 2021.” —Curt Brown, Ready Seafood

## An invitation to all

The Alliance will continue to provide valuable, place-based professional development and other opportunities to learn and collaborate. We welcome new members. To get involved and learn more about the Alliance, contact Keri Kaczor, Alliance Coordinator, Maine Sea Grant, [keri.kaczor@maine.edu](mailto:keri.kaczor@maine.edu) 207.832.0343; or visit [umaine.edu/alliance](http://umaine.edu/alliance)



Curt Brown (behind Alliance coordinator Keri Kaczor), Ready Seafood, shows the audience the Alliance-supported high pressure processing (HPP) technology that increases meat yield, enables the production of raw lobster meat, and triples the shelf-life of fresh lobster. This technology enables Ready Seafood to pursue expanded markets for their highest value product. The HPP machine is a cornerstone of their new facility, allowing Ready Seafood to process more lobster in Maine while creating new lobster products and full-time year round jobs. A new, value-added product created from this investment is Ready's "Cold Cracked Lobster™" that was turned into delicious lobster rolls for lunch.



On November 22, 2019, the Alliance was featured on Maine Sea Grant's Coastal Conversations radio program on WERU Community Radio! Seated from left to right: Sarah Redmond (Springtide Seaweed), Keri Kaczor (Alliance Coordinator, Maine Sea Grant) and Bill Mook (Mook Sea Farm) joined host Ron Beard at the station, while Curt Brown (Ready Seafood) and Dianne Tilton (Downeast Institute) joined via telephone to share their innovations.

## Alliance 2020 Steering Committee:

Curt Brown (Chair), Ready Seafood; Andrew Lively, Cooke Aquaculture; Brian Beal, UMaine Machias; Charles Tilburg, University of New England; Hugh Cowperthwaite, Coastal Enterprises, Inc.; Paul Anderson, Maine Center for Coastal Fisheries; Beth Bisson, Maine Sea Grant



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