February 9, 2017

Dear Members of The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Organizing Committee:

Sea Pact is a collective of nine leading North American seafood companies dedicated to driving stewardship and continuous improvement of social, economic, and environmental responsibility throughout the global seafood chain. Our members’ commitment to sustainable seafood sourcing has helped drive their profitability and business success, as well as their leadership role on current and emerging issues in the global seafood industry. There is a clear movement and shift that is happening globally towards more responsible and sustainable seafood production and consumption. Tokyo 2020 Olympics has the opportunity to capitalize on the forward movement on sustainable seafood procurement established by London and Rio, and help catch Japan up on this front globally.

The current draft Tokyo 2020 Sustainable Sourcing Code for Fishery Products is inadequate in several key areas, most notably: 1) the absence of robust and transparent requirements for seafood traceability, 2) ineffective in clear recognition of global standards for seafood certification, and 3) deficient in the adoption of international and domestic laws and regulations that would prevent sourcing from IUU fisheries and fishery or aquaculture operations with unacceptable environmental and social practices. Conspicuous weaknesses in these key areas expose the Tokyo 2020 Organizing Committee and the Japanese seafood industry to unnecessary uncertainty and risk.

Representing leading North American businesses at the recent 2016 Tokyo Sustainable Seafood Symposium, the message conveyed was of wholehearted support and belief in a resilient and sustainable Japanese seafood industry. We express here the need for an improved seafood procurement policy for Tokyo 2020 out of recognition that the current draft sourcing code falls short of global standards for sustainable seafood. On the international stage, a better policy is paramount for Tokyo.

Japan is one of the most, if not the most important country in the world to influence the future of global fisheries and the sustainability of global seafood supplies. If the draft Tokyo 2020 Sustainable Sourcing Code for Fishery Products is not strengthened, it will be a tremendous opportunity lost to help guide the Japanese seafood industry to build effective policy, market movement, and public awareness on seafood sustainability to be able to address and reverse the declining trends domestically. In a country where seafood is so important to identity, food culture, coastal communities and the economy, this importance and timeliness of this opportunity cannot be overstated.
Over the past two decades, key lessons have been learned by seafood industry stakeholders globally, revealing that robust sustainable seafood sourcing is achievable, supports healthy productive oceans, promotes a long-term supply of seafood, and is necessary to ensure a viable and profitable industry.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments and it is with great respect that we urge you to reassess the draft document and include the necessary elements for a more robust and effective code for sustainable sourcing of fishery products for Tokyo 2020.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Johnson
Managing Director
Sea Pact