



Healthy Ocean  
Thriving Fisheries  
Resilient Communities

## Organization Overview

The [Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust](#) (MBFT) is a 501c3 nonprofit dedicated to sustainable fisheries, resilient communities, and a healthy ocean. A trusted ally to the fishing community and regional food relief groups, MBFT promotes local and sustainable seafood production, supports vulnerable populations through [seafood donations](#), and strengthens the local fishing economy. By providing tools, resources, and technical assistance, MBFT supports fishermen, harbors, and seafood businesses essential to our maritime heritage and economic health.

Monterey Bay's once-thriving seafood economy—one of the most iconic in the nation—is at a tipping point. Climate-driven fishery disasters, shifting regulations, and economic pressures threaten the future of local seafood, jobs, and coastal livelihoods in our region. Recognizing this fact, we have set out with an ambitious plan to transform our working waterfronts by 2030 through *The Future of Blue Initiative*. The Future of Blue is a partnership between Monterey Bay Fisheries Trust and Regenerative California, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supercharging regional economies through cross-sector collaboration to design and implement projects to drive system-level change.

## Funding request from Monterey County: \$170,000

This request represents half of the total project budget for 2026. To date, we have received \$80,000 in seed funding from the Community Foundation of Monterey County, Monterey Bay Aquarium's Conservation and Science program, and Resources Legacy Fund. These funds, in addition to over \$40,000 in kind contributions from MBFT and Regenerative California, are supporting the planning and research phase of the initiative currently underway. We intend to match the County's support with additional philanthropic and grant funding for the remainder of the budget need.

## Overview of project

The Future of Blue aims to revitalize our working waterfronts and transform our region into a thriving, resilient, and innovative *blue economy*\* by 2030. This initiative will bring together fishery participants, seafood businesses, local government leaders, marine science and conservation institutions, food system groups, and citizens to realize a positive future for our working waterfronts.

The revitalization of Monterey Bay's ocean-based food economy benefits other economic sectors in the county, particularly the hospitality industry and marine science/technology. According to a 2008 survey of tourism professionals, civic leaders, and visitors to Monterey, the majority of respondents

surveyed placed a high degree of importance on the commercial fishing industry ([Responsive Management 2008](#)).

Between January-April 2026, we plan to convene stakeholders (anticipated to begin in Moss Landing harbor) to identify key challenges and infrastructure needs. This process and resulting summary report and recommendations will inform a feasibility study and **investment plan** to secure the resources needed for actionable change. The project will serve as a replicable model for Monterey and Santa Cruz harbors and can scale to other regions throughout the state.

### **Return on investment**

A 3-5 year Blue Economy Investment plan for Monterey County that includes projections for:

- Modernized & Climate-resilient Infrastructure (\$ public/private investment secured per \$ spent on planning)
- Jobs creation / workforce development (# of new jobs created / cost of workforce programming)
- Business vacancies (% reduction in vacancy rate or % increase in average commercial lease income in harbor areas)
- Tourism revenue to businesses, harbors, county (% increase in TOT (Transient Occupancy Tax), visitor spending, or harbor revenue)
- Fish landings, value, and participation (% increase in volume/value of landings; # of active permits) & increased community access to local seafood
- Marine Research & technology (\$ R&D investment attracted; # of startups or projects launched)

**Long Term outcomes** - After the implementation of the 5 year investment plan for the blue economy in Monterey County:

- A thriving regional economy with job increases across tourism, seafood production, and local support businesses.
- A vibrant and nutritious local food system feeding families, community members, and tourists.
- A healthy ocean ecosystem monitored by science/education groups in collaboration with fishermen.
- Systems level change: new era of regenerative businesses and enduring health, resilience, and prosperity, turning Monterey County into a blue economy beacon for the rest of the state.

### **Contact info**

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\* According to the World Bank, the blue economy is the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of the ocean ecosystem.