

# Speaker Atkins Announces “Pacific to Plate” Legislation to Boost Coastal Fish Markets

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**SAN DIEGO** – Assembly Speaker Toni G. Atkins (D-San Diego) has announced that she will introduce legislation, “Pacific to Plate,” to clarify and streamline state laws to make it easier for San Diego’s Tuna Harbor Dockside Market, and other fish markets like it, to grow and thrive.

“Since the market opened, thousands of San Diegans have enjoyed being able to walk down this pier and choose their next meal from the fresh catch brought ashore by our local fishermen,” Speaker Atkins said.

“Though the Market has been successful, there are still some barriers in state law that need to be overcome to ensure its ongoing operation. ‘Pacific to Plate,’ the legislation I am introducing in the Assembly, will help keep red tape from tangling up this boon to San Diego’s Blue Economy.”

Speaker Atkins hosted a Jan. 17 press conference during the weekly fish market to announce the proposed legislation. She was joined by San Diego County Supervisor Greg Cox, Port of San Diego Board Chairman Dan Malcolm and local fisherman Peter Halmay.

The proposed state legislation would:

- Allow Fishermen’s Markets to operate as food facilities
- Allow fresh fish to be cleaned for direct sale at Fishermen’s Markets, and
- Streamline the permitting process, so commercial fishermen can organize under a single permit—just like Certified Farmers’ Markets.

Currently, Fishermen’s Markets are not defined in state law as food facilities, complicating the permit process. In addition, a special exemption is needed to allow vendors to clean fresh fish for patrons.

“San Diego was once the tuna capital of the world,” said Supervisor Cox. “This bill can help us establish more fishermen’s markets, create more jobs for local fishermen and give San Diegans more fish caught fresh off our waters.”

The bill has attracted broad bipartisan support from San Diego’s state legislative delegation. Assemblymembers Rocky Chavez, Brian Jones, Brian Maienschein, Marie Waldron and Shirley Weber are co-sponsoring the “Pacific to Plate” bill, along with state Senators Joel Anderson, Patricia Bates, Marty Block and Ben Hueso.

San Diego’s Tuna Harbor market has been a success since its Aug. 2 opening, drawing 350 visitors a week, who spend about \$15,000 on fresh seafood brought directly to the pier by local fishermen.

The market was established following action by San Diego County and the Port District, which partnered to establish a place where local commercial fishermen could sell directly to consumers. The county and Port requested that the State become involved to ease regulations that could be obstacles to the growth of the Tuna Harbor market, and

other coastal markets like it.