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Mexican senator proposes nationwide ban on octopus farming over animal welfare concerns

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By Responsible Seafood Advocate

Bill would amend Mexico's fisheries law to prohibit the breeding or growth of cephalopods, citing animal welfare and sustainability concerns

A Mexican senator has introduced legislation that would ban octopus farming nationwide, citing concerns about animal welfare and the challenges associated with raising the species in captivity.

The bill proposes amendments to Mexico's General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture that would prohibit the breeding or growth stages of any cephalopod species in the country. If adopted, Mexico would become the second country in Latin America to propose such a ban, following similar legislation introduced in Chile in 2025.

Sen. Maki Esther Ortiz Domínguez of the Partido Verde Ecologista de México presented the proposal in the Mexican Senate, where it has now been referred to the relevant Senate commissions for discussion.



Mexican senator proposes ban on octopus farming, citing animal welfare concerns and pressure on wild fish used for feed. Photo by Pia B (<https://www.pexels.com/photo/selective-focus-photography-of-octopus-3046629/>).

California bans octopus farming and sales, citing animal welfare concerns



California bans octopus farming and the sale of farmed octopus products, citing animal welfare and environmental sustainability concerns.



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The bill was introduced by Fundación Veg, with technical and scientific support from the Aquatic Life Institute. Both groups are members of the Aquatic Animal Alliance – a coalition of more than 180 organizations focused on improving the welfare of aquatic animals in the food system.

Aquatic Life Institute said octopuses are carnivorous and require diets high in marine ingredients, which could increase pressure on wild fish populations. The organization also pointed to Mexico's only operational octopus farm, located in Sisal, Yucatán, where mortality rates have exceeded 50 percent over 12 years of operation, with 30 percent of deaths attributed to cannibalism among confined animals.

Similar measures have been introduced in the United States, including laws banning octopus farming in California and Washington and pending legislation in New York, Hawaii, North Carolina, New Jersey, Oregon, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

If approved, the organizations supporting the proposal say the measure would protect animals and ecosystems before the industry expands further in Mexico.

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