

The legislation is modeled after the USDA's successful Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, which is credited with preparing hundreds of young farmers and ranchers for agricultural careers.

If passed the bill would allow regional organizations, like the Alliance, to apply for grants up to \$200,000 to offer training and education programs.

"It wouldn't be an appropriation or new tax dollars," Pappalardo said. "It would be existing monies that are already in different programmatic funds within the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration."

Representatives from the Alliance will head to Washington D.C. later this month to join other groups from the Fishing Communities Coalition to lobby lawmakers.

"We will be walking Capitol Hill for a couple of days talking about this bill," Pappalardo said.