

Dear Senator/Representative,

We are writing to urge your support for legislation that will help prevent illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, forced labor, and seafood fraud. **The Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act (H.R. 3075)** leverages the United States' resources and leadership to track and block IUU seafood imports, increase transparency in the seafood supply chain, stop seafood fraud, and strengthen international fisheries management.

IUU fishing and human rights violations like forced labor and human trafficking often occur in tandem due to depleted fisheries, which pushes fishing vessels further out to sea for longer time periods. Since distant-water fishing results in higher costs for vessel operators, who must go further out and remain at sea longer to achieve a sizeable catch, vessels turn to human trafficking for cheap labor while utilizing fishing practices that overexploit fish stocks. Seafood fraud is also a rampant problem, with as much as a third of seafood sold in the United States mislabeled as a different species.

Because IUU fishing and forced labor are inextricably linked, they must be tackled together, using a whole-of-government approach. The Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act will address these interrelated issues in the seafood industry by:

- Expanding the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) to cover all species, establishing new import data requirements, and including labor data throughout the supply chain.
- Mandating Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) usage for U.S. vessels throughout the U.S. exclusive economic zone and the high seas, rather than in territorial waters alone. The bill also will authorize funding for purchasing AIS transmitters for vessels longer than 50 feet to support the updated requirements.
- Penalizing foreign-flagged fishing vessels that engage in IUU fishing by revoking their U.S. port privileges.
- Expanding traceability from the point of import to our dinner plate and requiring labelling that will deter seafood fraud and provide consumers with more information about their seafood.
- Improving the U.S.'s ability to use diplomatic tools and take action against countries that fail to address IUU fishing and human rights in their fleets.
- Strengthening coordination and information sharing across the U.S. government to address IUU fishing, seafood fraud and forced labor and other human rights abuses.

The Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act fills in gaps in the SIMP that allow seafood products caught using IUU practices and forced labor violations to enter the U.S. market. The SIMP currently only requires traceability data for 13 species from the point of catch to the point of import, overlooking approximately 60% of imported seafood products and leaving loopholes that can allow IUU fishing operations to escape monitoring and regulation by misreporting their catch species. The bill expands the SIMP to include all species imported into the U.S., making all species traceable throughout the supply chain. This expansion will close the U.S. market to the 60% of imports that could be vulnerable to production via forced labor and IUU fishing.

Another way the bill is tackling gaps in traceability is by extending traceability requirements from port to plate. Currently, importers are only required to track the seafood from the point of harvest to the port of importation. The Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Act extends tracking from the point of catch to the consumer's plate. In addition to this traceability extension, the bill will require that seafood labeling be

more transparent and comprehensive by providing consumers with information on the fish species they are buying, where and how it was caught, and whether it was farm-raised or wild-caught. These traceability measures will enable consumers to be confident that the seafood they are purchasing is not mislabeled and that it was caught, transported, and distributed without IUU fishing or human rights violations.

The expansion of AIS requirements in the United States in this bill is an essential step forward in increased transparency; the requirements would allow more effective targeting of vessels engaged in IUU fishing and forced labor. AIS devices transmit the identity, location, speed and direction of fishing vessels, making their fishing activity transparent. By expanding domestic AIS requirements to more fishing vessels, the U.S. can demand transparency as a condition of import, allowing the government to identify the high-risk shipments for increased inspections, audits, and enforcement actions.

Most importantly, the Illegal Fishing and Forced Labor Prevention Act explicitly links IUU fishing and labor rights violations, effectively underscoring that illegal fishing cannot be addressed without strong international labor standards. The Act is therefore essential for tackling these interconnected problems, and ensuring that our seafood is safe, legally caught, responsibly sourced, and honestly labeled.

Our organizations urge you to cosponsor this important legislation that will help fight IUU fishing, human rights abuses, and seafood fraud to protect our oceans and the people dependent on them. Thank you for your consideration and attention to these important issues.

Sincerely,