

**January 25, 2024**

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As chefs, we collectively serve seafood to millions of U.S. customers each year. We take pride in serving dishes that are good for both people and the planet. Today, we are writing to urge you to strengthen transparency and traceability throughout the seafood industry to help end illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and seafood fraud by expanding and strengthening the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP). SIMP is a crucial tool to help combat IUU fishing, seafood fraud and human rights abuses in the seafood supply chain. Currently, the program covers less than half of the seafood imports coming into the United States.

In June 2022, you issued the National Security Memorandum 11 – Combatting IUU fishing and Associated Labor Abuses (NSM-11), which states, “The United States is committed to... working to eliminate abusive labor practices, in particular forced labor, in supply chains” and called for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to issue a proposed rule to strengthen and expand SIMP by December of 2022. Yet, after issuing a limited proposed rule that would only result in a 4% to 8% increase in coverage by volume of seafood imported to the United States, NOAA recently withdrew its proposed rule altogether. The new program review process laid out by NOAA is vague and lacks a clear timeline for action. Seafood fraud, IUU fishing, and human rights abuses will continue occur throughout the seafood industry and seafood supply chains unless NOAA acts expeditiously to expand and improve SIMP. Traceability requirements should extend to all imported seafood if we are to keep IUU fished seafood out of U.S. markets.

As U.S. based chefs, we want to support hardworking U.S. fishers – the removal of IUU fishing products would increase total operating income of the U.S. commercial fishing industry by \$60.8 million. The large gaps in SIMP create loopholes that allow IUU seafood to slip through the U.S. border and into our markets.

By expanding SIMP to all species, requiring importers to report additional catch data, and including labor conditions in reporting requirements, NOAA will close loopholes that enable IUU fishing and forced labor. SIMP also helps prevent a bait and switch in seafood supply chains, protecting businesses and consumers from seafood fraud. NOAA should also increase traceability throughout the seafood supply chain by requiring catch documentation for all imported seafood and traceability from boat to plate. These measures will allow chefs to confidently stand behind the seafood we serve.

Americans overwhelmingly support policies to end illegal fishing and seafood fraud. A [January 2021 poll](#) found that ninety-two percent of American consumers agree that they want to be confident in the seafood they eat. The United States has the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that seafood served across the country is safe, legally caught, responsibly sourced, and honestly labeled for both our consumers and our oceans. We urge you to take a critical step toward fulfilling the promise of NSM-11 and expand SIMP to include all imported seafood.

Sincerely,

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