

IMPACT

Direct and indirect outcomes of the investigation.

Congress investigates.

Company ends lease.

Whistleblower files complaints.

President asked to stop imports.

Federal agencies engage.

Lawmakers seek block to Indian shrimp.

India shrimp nominated for forced labor product list.

FDA questioned.

Legislation proposed.

Investigation



The US Department of Labor (DOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs' (ILAB) released their annual list of countries and products shown to have high rates of international labor violations and placed India shrimp into the "forced labor" category. Among the sources cited for ILAB's determination on Indian shrimp is the Outlaw Ocean Project's investigation about the Indian shrimp industry.

Sources: [IntraFish](#), [SeafoodSource](#)

September 6, 2024

Investigation



Undercurrent News, an industry publication, published a story saying that Choice Canning Company Unit II, a large Indian shrimp processor recently caught up in a big public controversy surrounding its business practices, has now been "red listed" by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Choice Canning previously claimed it severed ties with the plant last year but documents subsequently published raised questions about these claims. The FDA red list identifies companies whose seafood products may contain unapproved drugs.

Source: [Undercurrent News](#)

May 28, 2024

Investigation



SeafoodSource, an industry publication, reported on FDA's refusal of three shrimp imports from Choice Canning for veterinary residue contamination. The FDA had said these imports originated from Choice Canning Company, a shrimp processing facility in India, but Choice Canning has denied that it exported the contaminated shrimp stating that the India-based shrimp exporter Alpha Marine has taken over the facility that had shipped the refused shrimp. This comes after The Outlaw Ocean Project's whistleblower investigation, which discovered thousands of documents that revealed forced labor violations and the knowing shipment of shrimp contaminated by antibiotics.

Source: [SeafoodSource](#)

May 7, 2024

Investigation



The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently tested shrimp imported to the U.S. from an Indian company called Choice Canning and found it laced with veterinary drugs (which typically refers to antibiotics or antifungals). The shipment was stopped at the port. The federal action comes several weeks after an investigation by the Outlaw Ocean Project found widespread concerns tied to human rights abuses and food safety, including knowingly shipping antibiotic-contaminated shrimp to the U.S. In aggressive letters from its lawyers and in subsequent interviews with company directors, Choice Canning adamantly claimed it never ships shrimp to the US tainted by antibiotics. The investigation pointed out that the FDA tests less than one percent of imports for antibiotics. A whistleblower tied to the Outlaw Ocean Project investigation submitted a formal complaint to Congress and the FDA as well as to Customs and Border Protection in which he provided documents showing that antibiotic shrimp was repeatedly sent to the plant.

Source: **Food and Drug Administration**

May 6, 2024

Investigation



SeaChoice, a Canadian environmental advocacy group, published a report linking shrimp imported to Canada to human rights and environmental abuses within Indian processing plants and the unreliability of seafood certifications. Within this report SeaChoice cited The Outlaw Ocean Project's whistleblower investigation that had revealed through thousands of documents numerous labor abuses and safety violations that had been acknowledged by upper management at Choice Canning. SeaChoice also launched a [campaign](#) to urge major North American grocers to stop human rights abuse and environmental harms in their seafood supply chains.

Source: **SeaChoice**

April 24, 2024

Hearing



In the April 17th U.S. Senate Finance Committee hearing with U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Katherine Tai, Senator Bill Cassidy highlighted The Outlaw Ocean Project's recent whistleblower investigation in a question about USTR's progress on preventing the "dumping" of shrimp and rice from India. The Outlaw Ocean Project had received thousands of documents revealing labor abuses and safety violations within an Indian shrimp processor that imported shrimp to major brands. Lax enforcement of safety and labor laws of shrimp processed in India and imported to the U.S. is argued to create an unfair subsidy to Indian shrimp farmers.

Source: **Senator Bill Cassidy**

April 18, 2024

Policy



Undercurrent News, an industry publication, reported on The American Shrimp Processors Association's (ASPA) request to the U.S. government to increase the tariffs for Indian shrimp producers and ban imports of shrimp from India produced through forced labor. The request by ASPA came after The Outlaw Ocean Project's investigation into food safety and labor abuses at an Indian shrimp processing plant. The ability to file the request was enabled because the Dept of Commerce recently changed its regulations to enable stakeholders to allege that a lack of enforcement of domestic laws (including labor laws) can in essence be a form of subsidy.

Sources: **Undercurrent News, American Shrimp Processors Association**

April 16, 2024

Hearing



At a House Oversight Hearing on the Food and Drug Administration, a lawmaker from Louisiana, Representative Clay Higgins, questioned the FDA Commissioner (in a somewhat comedic exchange) about recent revelations from the Outlaw Ocean Project's investigation of Indian shrimp. The lawmaker said that he plans to propose new legislation that will help/require more aggressive policing of food safety concerns by the agency.

APRIL 11, 2024



Excerpt - Oversight of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Source: **Oversight of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

April 11, 2024

Investigation



Undercurrent News, an industry publication, reported on an American shrimp company called Choice Canning that runs processing plants in India. The article said that the company has canceled its lease with a plant in Amalapuram, India that was the focus of the Outlaw Ocean Project investigation which was based on thousands of documents provided by a whistleblower, Joshua Farinella. The documents revealed a variety of labor and food safety concerns, which have led to inquiries from the FDA and Congress. The company said it is moving operations to a new facility in Bapatla.

the company and the industry, particularly in India that will be more automated.

Source: **Undercurrent News**

April 11, 2024

Statement



Constantine Cannon, a law firm, applauded American whistleblower Joshua Farinella on their blog for exposing labor and safety violations. Farinella had provided thousands of documents to The Outlaw Ocean Project that had raised food safety and human rights concerns within an Indian shrimp processing facility.

Source: **Constantine Cannon**

April 11, 2024

Investigation



In an article about NOAA's 15-month initiative Collaborative Accelerator for Lawful Maritime Conditions in Seafood (CALM-CS), SeafoodSource cites The Outlaw Ocean Project's investigations as having rocked the seafood sector by flagging forced labor and other abuses within the industry.

Source: **SeafoodSource**

April 9, 2024

Petition



The Southern Shrimp Alliance, an industry group in the U.S., cited the Outlaw Ocean Project investigation into India shrimp as part of the motivation for a formal legal petition letter it sent today to the Department of Labor asking for its Bureau of International Affairs to officially add India to the list of countries flagged for child and/or forced labor.

Source: **Southern Shrimp Alliance**

March 23, 2024

Policy



Two U.S. lawmakers sent a letter to President Joe Biden urging him to immediately halt shrimp imports into the United States from India. The letter cited a whistleblower who provided thousands of pages of documents to The Outlaw Ocean Project that seem to indicate a range of food safety and human rights concerns at an Indian shrimp processing plant that ships to the U.S. "While the European Union samples 50% of shrimp, the FDA routinely tests a fraction of one percent," the letter said. "As a result, the American market is uniquely hospitable for Indian shrimp, despite frequent reports of contamination with banned antibiotics and veterinary drugs, salmonella, or filth."

Source: **U.S. House of Representatives**

March 23, 2024

Source: **U.S. Congress**

March 22, 2024

Statement



U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy, a Republican from Louisiana, released a statement about Joshua Farinella, a whistleblower, who provided documents to the OO for an investigation tied to a company exporting shrimp from India to the US. The Senator called for the Office of the United States Trade Representative "to act to ensure American consumers are not put in harm's way."

Source: **U.S. Senator Bill Cassidy**

March 20, 2024

Statement



The Southern Shrimp Alliance praised The Outlaw Ocean Project's investigation into the Indian shrimp industry, which exposed inhumane conditions for migrant workers peeling shrimp for export. Executive Director John Williams said that The Outlaw Ocean Project highlighted the stark contrast between the stringent regulations faced by U.S. shrimpers and the leniency granted to foreign suppliers, expressing frustration over proposed rollbacks on basic standards for imported seafood.

Source: **Southern Shrimp Alliance**

March 20, 2024

Investigation



Several US lawmakers - Raul M. Grijalva, Jared Huffman and Melanie Stansbury - wrote to the lawyer for Joshua Farinella, a whistleblower recently profiled in an investigation about forced labor and antibiotic shrimp tied to a shrimp processing plant in India that ships to the US. "The House Committee on Natural Resources has jurisdiction under House Rule X.1(m) to conduct oversight and investigations of all matters relating to fisheries," the letter said, citing the committee's "ongoing efforts to reduce human rights violations and increase transparency in the seafood supply chain." The letter asked Mr. Farinella to hand over "Spreadsheets of worker headcounts and wages, Text messages and WhatsApp messages, Emails, Documents and recorded phone conversations, including those with the CEO and senior management" from the plant.

Source: **U.S. Congress**

March 18, 2024

INVESTIGATION

The Whistleblower

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