



Frank Pallone, Jr is demanding action against seafood products imported from China. Photo: Frank Pallone, Jr.

## US lawmaker demands more intense screening of seafood imports from China

'I am concerned that seafood exported to the United States from China is processed by Uyghur workers,' the lawmaker said.

5 December 2023 22:59 GMT *UPDATED* 5 December 2023 22:59 GMT

By [Rachel Sapin](#) 

New Jersey Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr., has joined a growing list of US lawmakers who are asking the government to enhance screening of seafood products from China they believe are processed in plants using forced labor.

Pallone wrote Monday in a letter to the US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) the agency needs to "take immediate action to enhance screening of seafood products imported from the People's Republic of China to ensure compliance with international and domestic trade, safety, and labor standards."

He cited an investigation from the nonprofit Outlaw Ocean Project published earlier this year in *The New Yorker* magazine alleging key US companies are importing and distributing seafood produced in China through the use of forced labor.

"It is imperative that your agency take decisive action to ensure all imported seafood products comply with the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act and all domestic laws," he wrote.

The investigation revealed evidence of forced labor of Uyghurs workers transferred from Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region to seafood processing factories in the Shandong province of China that have supplied US companies as well as the US government.

"I am concerned that seafood exported to the United States from China is processed by Uyghur workers, a repressed ethnic minority in China's Xinjiang Region," he said. "This is in direct violation of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which prohibits the import into the United States of products made by forced labor in Xinjiang."

Following publication of the investigation, US supermarket giant Albertsons stopped purchasing certain products produced in China and supplied by Canadian seafood company High Liner.

The investigation has US and European seafood buyers and retailers re-examining their supply chains. The companies investigated include 26 Chinese processors, 98 importers and 241 grocery stores, with retail powerhouses such as Walmart and Costco implicated.

The majority of the retailers are located in the United States. In total, the Outlaw Ocean Project said it identified seafood imports in more than 20 countries that are allegedly tied to labor abuses in Xinjiang, China.

The nonprofit recently released [what it said is extensive visual evidence](#) of forced labor being tied to China-based Chishan Group and its associated ships and plants. The company processes 30 percent of all Chinese squid and 17 percent of squid exported to the United States, according to Outlaw Ocean.

Several brands, including Wee!, PAFCO, and Lund's Fisheries, have already cut ties to these plants following the investigation, Outlaw Ocean said.

In October lawmakers with the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, sent a letter to the Department of Homeland Security asking for the agency to issue Withhold Release Orders (WROs) for all seafood processing facilities in Shandong and Liaoning provinces. (Copyright)

[Processing](#) [Shipping & Logistics](#) [Outlaw Ocean Project](#) [China](#) [Slavery](#) [US Congress](#)

[US Customs and Border Protection \(CBP\)](#)

 Alert me about these topics

Manage My Alerts

Share: [Email](#)