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Grijalva Leads Sweeping Bipartisan Request to Eight Federal Agencies to Examine Efforts to Combat IUU Fishing

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) led eight bipartisan letters to federal agencies requesting information regarding their efforts to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and forced labor in the U.S. and global seafood supply chain. The recipient agencies include the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of State (State), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Chair Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) signed the letters to CEQ and NOAA.

Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee Ranking Member Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee Ranking Member Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.), and Rep. Garret Graves (R-La.) signed all eight letters.

Recent investigative reporting by the [Outlaw Ocean Project](#) detailed disturbing accounts of IUU fishing and forced labor practices across the global seafood supply chain. In their letters, the lawmakers warn of the major economic risks of IUU fishing to Americans, explaining:

“IUU fishing threatens domestic seafood production and economic prosperity for Americans. According to a report by the U.S. International Trade Commission, nearly eleven percent of all U.S. seafood imports, equal to \$2.4 billion annually, are derived from IUU fishing. Cheaper illegal seafood imports cost the U.S. commercial seafood industry millions of dollars annually by driving down the cost of American-caught and processed seafood. Globally, \$10 to \$23 billion are lost annually due to the impacts of IUU fishing on global markets.”

The lawmakers are requesting information from each agency to help assess how they are responding to the new information from the Outlaw Ocean Project and others. Select details for each request are provided below.

- **CEQ:** The request seeks information about CEQ’s engagement with other relevant federal agencies to use existing authorities to address reports of IUU fishing and forced labor in the seafood industry. [READ the full letter to CEQ here.](#)
- **NOAA:** The request seeks information about NOAA’s efforts to investigate the allegations reported by the Outlaw Ocean Project, to help identify potential improvements to its Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP). [READ the full letter to NOAA here.](#)
- **State:** The request seeks information about State’s efforts to strengthen domestic and international governance to combat IUU fishing and forced labor. The letter commends State’s recent addition of seafood as a high-priority sector for enforcement under the *Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act*. [READ the full letter to State here.](#)
- **DOL:** The request seeks information about DOL’s efforts to strengthen global labor standards and address human trafficking and forced labor in the fishing industry. [READ the full letter to DOL here.](#)
- **USDA:** The request seeks information about USDA’s efforts to ensure the safety of our imported seafood given its authority to oversee the importation and inspection of seafood at ports of entry. [READ the full letter to USDA here.](#)
- **CBP:** The request seeks information about CBP’s efforts to investigate IUU fishing allegations, given its role in enforcing trade regulations, including Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930. More specifically, the request asks about CBP’s Commercial Targeting and Analysis Center, seafood import inspections, the Automated Commercial Environment system, withhold release orders, and the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force. [READ the full letter to CBP here.](#)
- **FDA:** The request seeks information about FDA’s efforts to ensure the safety of the nation’s seafood supply given its authorities under the *Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act*, *Food Safety Modernization Act* and the *Public Health Service Act*, as well as a [2017 GAO report](#) that offered recommendations for imported seafood. [READ the full letter to FDA here.](#)
- **FTC:** The request seeks information about the FTC’s efforts to ensure the fair marketing of seafood within the seafood industry. [READ the full letter to FTC here.](#)

Additional Background

[Extensive reporting](#) has brought to light the pervasiveness of IUU fishing and forced labor practices across the global seafood supply chain. Human rights abuses and other IUU fishing practices pose significant threats to U.S. national security, public health, economic stability, geopolitical dynamics, and the environment.

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