

## Critical Funding for the Seafood Import Monitoring Program

To prioritize the economic competitiveness of American fishermen, the [Seafood Import Monitoring Program](#) needs increased funding.

According to the U.S. International Trade Commission, the **flood of IUU imports into the US market reduces US fishermen's income by an estimated \$60.8 million per year**. In 2019, [an estimated \\$2.4 billion worth of seafood imported into the US](#) was the product of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, **equaling about 11% of all seafood imports that year**. Since IUU fishing perpetrators don't follow the same safeguards as US fishermen, **their cheap products are directly competing with domestic fishermen in an already difficult industry**. The Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP) is the US government's best tool for keeping seafood products caught from IUU fishing or using forced labor out of the US market by requiring imported seafood to have documentation that demonstrates it originated from a legal fishery. ***The current base funding is insufficient for the scale of imports entering the US and needs to increase as the program expands to cover additional seafood imports.*** To prioritize the program's success and the economic competitiveness of American fishermen, Congress should appropriate \$10 million for the Seafood Import Monitoring Program in the FY2026 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

### Benefits of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program

SIMP is an import control program that was formed to keep IUU products out of the U.S., protecting consumers from fraudulent products. SIMP currently applies to 13 species and species groups considered "at risk" of IUU fishing and seafood fraud, covering less than 40% of seafood imports by volume and value. In November 2024, NOAA released an [Action Plan](#) with intentions to expand and modernize the program. This expansion will include covering 100% of seafood imports; requiring data submission prior to import; developing a voluntary government to government import data program for more precise screening; and collecting additional data to address forced labor risks. This will enable NOAA and CBP to find and block IUU products from entering the U.S. market.

The U.S. commercial and recreational fishing industry adds more than \$321 billion to the U.S. economy and supports more than 2.3 million jobs every year. This number could be even higher by strengthening and expanding SIMP to stop lower quality illegal seafood from crossing our borders and entering U.S. commerce. Providing NOAA with enough resources to fully implement SIMP would allow the program to grow at the intended capacity and help ensure that seafood imported into the US is safe, legally caught and honestly labeled, thereby protecting Americans from illicit seafood and ensuring domestic fishermen can compete on an even playing field.