

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 9, 2025

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science Appropriations
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science Appropriations
H-310, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Meng:

We write to request your support for an additional \$5 million in the FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service to support implementation of the Seafood Import Monitoring Program (SIMP). Additional funding for SIMP is necessary to keep our food supply chains free from illegally caught seafood and seafood produced with forced labor.

Researchers estimate that at least 1 in 5 fish caught globally are caught illegally, with a total cost to coastal nations between \$10 billion and \$23 billion a year.¹ The Seafood Import Monitoring Program is our best tool to keep seafood caught from IUU fishing activities and forced labor out of the U.S. market by requiring imported seafood to have documentation that demonstrates it originated from a legal fishery. This catch documentation, paired with chain of custody recordkeeping requirements, can ensure that key information follows the seafood from the boat or farm to the U.S. border.

The flood of IUU imports into the U.S. market is extremely detrimental to domestic fishermen, with up to 32% of the wild-caught seafood imported into the United States illegally. If the U.S. government were to successfully stop IUU seafood from entering our borders, U.S. fishermen would see about a 20% increase in revenue.²

The present funding for SIMP is insufficient to meet the program's needs. In NOAA's 2021 Report on SIMP Implementation, NOAA stated that implementing the full potential of SIMP

¹ The Pew Charitable Trusts (2023, August 2). Despite progress, illegal catch continues to reach the market. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2023/08/despite-progress-illegal-catch-continues-to-reach-the-market>

² Oceana (2021) Tools to Stop Illegal Fishing. https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/06/iuu-21-0001_iuu_transparency_report_m1_digital_spreads.pdf

would require a dedicated team to staff the program as well as enhanced information technology (IT) infrastructure.³ An increase in funding will allow NOAA to address these limitations.

An increase in SIMP funding would enhance the program's auditing capacity by enabling the hiring of full-time auditors, allowing NOAA to identify and screen more imports. The program's information technology infrastructure could also be able to be modernized and integrated to support SIMP through better funding. All obstacles NOAA has identified to implementing and enforcing SIMP could be alleviated with greater funding allocated to the program.

Providing NOAA with enough resources to fully implement SIMP would allow the program to operate at its highest capacity and help ensure that seafood imported into the U.S. is legally and honestly sourced, benefiting U.S. consumers and increasing revenues for honest U.S. fishermen whose markets are undercut by seafood imports from IUU sources.

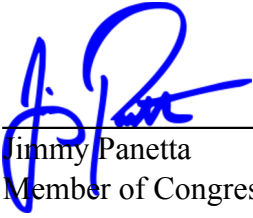
In order to ensure that the SIMP program receives this funding, we request the following report language:

Seafood Import Monitoring Program - SIMP is an essential tool for keeping seafood from illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) sources from entering US markets by requiring documentation for imported seafood that demonstrates it originated from a legal fishery. IUU fishing threatens ocean conservation and abets human trafficking and forced labor in global seafood supply chains. This catch documentation paired with chain of custody recordkeeping requirements ensures that key information follows the seafood from the boat or farm to the U.S. border. The committee directs NMFS to allocate an additional \$5 million for SIMP implementation and to move forward with implementation of the Action Plan to Improve the U.S. Seafood Import Monitoring Program. Strengthening SIMP will benefit US fishermen and consumers by preventing seafood from illegal, unregulated, and unreported sources from entering our markets.

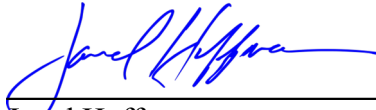
Thank you for consideration of our request for an additional \$5 million for SIMP program implementation and for all your efforts to ensure our food supply chains are free of illegally caught fish and seafood produced with forced labor.

Sincerely,

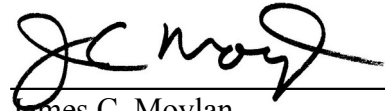
³ NOAA. (2021). *Report on the implementation of the U.S. Seafood Import Monitoring Program*. <https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-05/SIMP%20Implementation%20Report%202021.pdf?null>



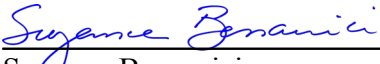
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Jared Huffman
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Suzanne Bonamici
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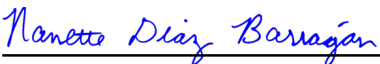
Julia Brownley
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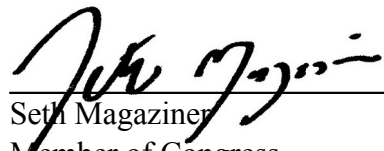
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



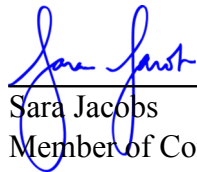
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



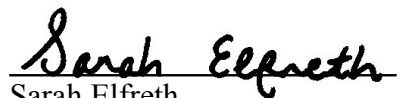
Kevin Mullin
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