

Testimony for Mississippi State Senator Sean Tindell on Frozen Warmwater Shrimp From China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam

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Chairman Williamson, ITC Commissioners, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I am here on behalf of the people of Mississippi State Senate District 49 and in support of the Gulf coast and indeed the entire U.S. shrimp industry. The shrimp industry in Mississippi has a real and positive impact throughout our community and across this country and that is why I strongly support the imposition of countervailing duties on frozen warmwater shrimp from China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Born and raised in South Mississippi, I know firsthand the importance of the U.S. shrimp industry. Everywhere you look along our coastline, there is evidence of the industry's unique traditions and lifestyle that have sustained the people of Mississippi and fed a nation for centuries. Dating back to our earliest settlers, generations have continued to pass down their expert knowledge to preserve and extend this precious industry. From where to find the bountiful biome regions or the best trawl nets or the secret recipe to mama's Mississippi shrimp and grits, the shrimp industry is a time-honored way of life in our community.

Many of the shrimp-related jobs in my home state are performed by families that have worked together for generations to operate and maintain their own businesses. Growing up, I spent a lot of summers and weekends at my family's small business, so I appreciate the conviviality that exists when families and communities create a heritage together by working together. Now a small business owner myself, I further recognize and appreciate all of the effort that these entrepreneurs and workers pour into the shrimp industry every single day. A solid work ethic is a staple Mississippi value, and there is no lack of it on the boats, docks, and plants that pepper our coastline.

One of the best parts about growing up in Gulfport and Biloxi was that I was lucky enough to have a front-row seat to all of the great events celebrating our beloved shrimp industry. Every year, Biloxi hosts the Biloxi Blessing of the Fleet and the Biloxi Shrimp Festival. This year marked the 84th annual Blessing of the Fleet, where shrimp boats out in the Mississippi Sound are blessed with holy water by the Pastor of St. Michael Catholic Church and the Bishop of the Biloxi Diocese to invoke a prosperous season. The festival takes place the day before the Blessing and is always a lively event featuring Mississippi's finest shrimp dishes and the ever-popular crowning of the Shrimp King and Queen.

Not only does the shrimp industry play a huge role in Mississippi's rich history, it also plays a significant role in our state's economy. Last year's shrimp catch in Mississippi amounted to 13 million pounds and was valued at more than \$24 million dollars. Furthermore, the shrimp industry in Mississippi supports more than two thousand jobs and provides \$44 million dollars in annual income to our state. Overall, our shrimp industry had an estimated economic impact of well over \$100 million dollars.

Unfortunately, the survival of all of the wonderful historical, cultural, and economical aspects of Mississippi's shrimp industry that I have talked about today is threatened by subsidized imports from China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. These nations are not playing by the rules of international trade and their unfair and egregious practices need to be stopped. Last year, these countries exported over 883 million pounds of shrimp to the U.S. worth nearly \$3.6 billion dollars. Additionally, these countries account for 89% of U.S. shrimp imports and over three-quarters of the domestic market, overall. The numerous subsidies provided by these governments cover all aspects of their shrimp industries. For example, in China, the government maintains tax incentives for aquaculture and shrimp processing facilities. Export subsidies are provided by the Malaysian government in the form of tax incentives for "promoted products" intended for export, and by the government of India as special duty remissions for shrimp exports. The government of Indonesia writes of

debts owed by shrimp processors, and, in Vietnam, the government provides land rent discounts and exemptions to shrimp farmers.

Over the past decade, the Gulf region has been plagued by Hurricane Katrina, the BP Gulf oil spill, and the Great Recession. It is hard to believe that these devastating events were the calm before the storm. Subsidized imports from the seven subject countries are poised to be the most damaging blow to the region yet. Luckily, there is a cure for this problematic situation and it comes in the form of countervailing duties. It is time for the hard-working boats, docks and processors in Mississippi and throughout the Gulf to finally obtain some relief.

In closing, I came all the way to Washington today to do everything in my power to support the U.S. shrimp industry and protect it from the continuation of anti-competitive behavior from abroad. As a lifelong resident of District 49, I am passionate about serving the citizens of our district and the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. I believe in taking concrete steps to lead Mississippi's shrimp industry to greater prosperity. An important and tangible step forward for this vital industry is the imposition of countervailing duties on frozen warmwater shrimp from China, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam. This action will allow the U.S. shrimp industry to survive now and far into the future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I am happy to answer any questions.