

Help Fight Seafood Fraud and Illegal Fishing: Support the Safety and Fraud Enforcement for Seafood (SAFE Seafood) Act

Seafood is a popular food in the U.S., yet consumers often have little or no information about what they are eating and few assurances, particularly for imported seafood, that these products are legal and meet U.S. health standards. The information that is provided on seafood labels is typically insufficient to allow consumers to make smart decisions and is often inaccurate or fraudulent. **The Safety and Fraud Enforcement for Seafood (SAFE Seafood) Act (H.R. 1012/S. 520) takes important steps to protect consumers, honest U.S. fishermen, and our oceans by requiring product traceability and better access to information about the seafood's origins.**

Seafood fraud includes any number of dishonest practices like species substitution, short-weighting, and false labeling to avoid tariffs. Seafood fraud hurts consumers, honest fishermen, seafood businesses, and our oceans. Recent studies have found that fraud occurs up to 70 percent of the time for commonly-swapped species such as red snapper, wild salmon and Atlantic cod. Today, the U.S. imports more than 90 percent of all seafood consumed domestically, but less than two percent of that is inspected at the border and virtually none of that is inspected specifically for fraud or legality. The complex path that seafood travels from bait to plate allows many opportunities for fraud, including allowing illegally-caught fish into the U.S. market.

Consumers deserve assurances that the seafood products they eat are legal and safe. The federal government has the authority to combat many aspects of seafood fraud and international illegal fishing, yet its current efforts are woefully inadequate. The SAFE Seafood Act will help improve systems for seafood safety, legality, traceability, and consumer information by:

- **Requiring “bait to plate” traceability and better information available to consumers:** The legislation will require that all seafood include detailed information, including the scientific and acceptable market names of the species, gear type used (H.R. 1012), geographic catch area, whether it was wild or farmed, and whether it underwent any transformation (such as previous freezing or treating) along the way.
- **Update the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s Seafood List to standardize seafood names:** The legislation will update the FDA Seafood List to improve the standardization of seafood market names, helping consumers confidently identify safe and legal seafood they purchase and helping retailers identify acceptable market names for the seafood they sell. The list will include the scientific name of the species, acceptable and unacceptable market names, the common or regional names of seafood, and any consumption advisories that exist for the species.
- **Authorizing import refusal of mislabeled seafood:** The legislation prohibits the import of any seafood that the Secretary of Commerce or the Secretary of Health and Human Services deems mislabeled according to the traceability requirements of the Act.
- **Improving interagency cooperation:** The legislation will require increased coordination and communication among the federal agencies tasked with addressing seafood safety and fraud, thereby improving the government’s efforts to address the problem.
- **Tracking perpetrators of seafood fraud:** The legislation will create an online database documenting each exporter whose seafood is imported into the U.S., identifying those who violate federal seafood safety and natural resource law with the timing, type and frequency of the violations.

**Congress can act to protect honest fishermen, consumers, and our oceans.
Pass the SAFE Seafood Act now.**