

## **Chefs and Restaurant Owners Call on Congress to Require Seafood Traceability and Prevent Fraud**

As chefs and restaurant owners, we are committed to serving seafood that protects our oceans, our wallets and our health. Yet as more seafood is imported into the United States, our fish follows an increasingly complex path from fishing vessel to plate, increasing the risk of fraud each step of the way and making it more difficult for us to make eco-friendly choices.

Despite growing concern about where our nation's seafood comes from, chefs, restaurant owners, and consumers are routinely given little or no information about the fish they purchase. We rely on our purveyors to supply us with high quality, safe, legal, and honestly labeled seafood.

Unfortunately, Oceana recently found that one-third, or 33 percent, of seafood samples collected nationally were mislabeled according to Food and Drug Administration guidelines, especially for popular species like red snapper, wild salmon and Atlantic cod, disguising fish that are less desirable, cheaper or more readily available.

**Fortunately, Congress can do something to address this problem. The Safety and Fraud Enforcement for Seafood (SAFE Seafood) Act (H.R.1012/S.520)** would require that all seafood sold in the U.S. be accompanied by detailed information, including the species name and where and when it was caught or farmed. The bill would also strengthen our government's interagency coordination on fighting seafood fraud, as well as improve its ability to identify those who mislabel seafood and refuse entry of those products, if imported.

With about 1,700 different species of seafood from all over the world now available in the U.S., it is unrealistic to expect chefs and restaurant owners to be able to independently and accurately determine that the fish they are getting is actually the one they paid for. We should be able to tell our customers, without question, what they are eating as well as where, when and how it was caught.

Congress has an opportunity to set standards that ensure consumers are not being cheated. By tracing seafood from the fishing vessel to the dinner plate, we can have more confidence that the food we serve is safe, legally caught, and honestly labeled.

With your help, we can continue to make decisions that not only please our customers, but also help protect our oceans.

**Please pass the SAFE Seafood Act today.**

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