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Shrimpers Welcome Hurricane Relief Package

Tarpon Springs, FL – The U.S. shrimp industry applauds the \$106.5 billion 2006 emergency supplemental appropriations being considered by the U.S. Senate that includes \$27 billion in relief for the environmental and economic damages that resulted from the 2005 hurricane season.

“Eight months after the devastating 2005 hurricanes, several Gulf coast communities look as though the storms hit last week,” said John Williams, Executive Director of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. “We are grateful for the leadership of Appropriations Committee Chair Cochran and the committee membership for helping our affected brethren face the tough recovery ahead of them.”

The bill addresses many of the immediate needs of affected fishermen, from removal of debris in navigable waterways to rebuilding of docking, fueling and ice facilities. It also includes monies to mitigate future catastrophes and natural disasters, monitor the recovery of the Gulf of Mexico’s fishery resources and fisheries, and replace environmentally-friendly gear used by the shrimp industry.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita caused over \$2 billion in damages to the fisheries in Louisiana alone. Many of the affected communities have made remarkable progress in their recovery considering the unprecedented flooding and destruction. The shrimp industry is proud to have boats and processors returning to business in all affected states. Yet, areas such as Venice, Louisiana and Bayou LaBatre, Alabama still have shrimp vessels beached on land, fishermen without homes, and a devastated infrastructure that requires immediate assistance from the federal government.

“The Senate’s appropriations proposal gives U.S. shrimpers hope. We thank Senators Shelby and Landrieu and the National Marine Fisheries Services for hearing the Southern Shrimp Alliance’s requests for assistance and providing the leadership and resources necessary to help our fisheries recover from these destructive hurricanes,” stated Williams. “The long heritage of harvesting shrimp from the open waters has survived many storms, and we are rebuilding now as we have in the past.”

The emergency supplemental appropriations bill approved by the Appropriations Committee is expected to be considered by the full Senate after the spring recess.

Consumers can help U.S. shrimpers rebound from the hurricanes by asking for Wild American Shrimp® at restaurants and grocery stores across the United States. U.S. wild-caught shrimp continues to be available after the hurricanes and has been verified through government testing to be of the same high quality as before the storms.

SSA is an alliance of the U.S. warm-water wild shrimp fishery from eight states: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. For more information, please visit www.shrimpalliance.com.

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