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### **SSA Responds to Political Efforts against Shrimp Petitions**

*Washington, DC*— On May 7, 2004, several Members of Congress sent a letter to Secretary of Commerce Evans regarding the ongoing shrimp antidumping investigations of six countries: Brazil, China, Ecuador, India, Thailand, and Vietnam. The letter urges the Department to consider extending the preliminary determination of dumping margins a full 50 days, which would allow substantial volumes of dumped shrimp to further harm the U.S. shrimp industry. In response to the letter, the Southern Shrimp Alliance issued the following statement:

In February, the International Trade Commission unanimously found imports materially injured the domestic shrimp industry in a preliminary determination. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) data supports the allegations of market distortion and injury, showing a 33% drop in dockside shrimp prices and the declining value of the domestic harvest from \$690,453,000 to \$460,878,000 as low-priced imports flooded the market between 2000 and 2002. The Department of Commerce has the ability to extend its determination up to 50 days if the investigations are extraordinarily complicated, but should take the least amount of time necessary to fully analyze the information despite political pressure to drag out the process for the financial profit of importers, distributors and retailers of foreign dumped shrimp.

The letter incorrectly states, “the Department of Commerce staff is considering omitting established practices” in the shrimp case. In essence, the letter alleges the Department of Commerce of biases even before it makes a decision. The antidumping regulations, however, are administered under due process laws and are not open to methods outside of the regulations. U.S. antidumping findings and methodologies are subject to federal court appeal and review international tribunals, preventing manipulation and biases.

Specifically, the letter fears the Department will “construct prices” for shrimp in order to make an apples-to-apples price comparison between shrimp sold in the U.S. market and the home or third country market. A substantial portion of shrimp sales involve a comparison of identical products and do not require any adjustments. Where there are not identical products, the Department has a long established practice that allow for apples-to-apples comparisons. The lawyers on both sides of the shrimp dispute are presenting their arguments regarding the most appropriate methods to make these comparisons. Despite political pressure, the Department should use the methodology that provides the most accurate, apples-to-apples comparison of shrimp prices in the United States to shrimp prices in the home or third country market based upon the antidumping regulations.

Dumping is a violation of the rules of free trade and should be fully offset through the application of U.S. trade laws in a prompt manner. The U.S. trade laws are consistent with international trade agreements and similar to the laws of almost every one of our trading partners. Thousands of U.S. shrimpers, hundreds of companies, and coastal communities throughout eight southern states are relying upon strong enforcement these established laws to offset the market distortions caused by dumped shrimp imports.