



# The Shrimp e-Advocate

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is a non-profit alliance of members of the U.S. shrimp industry in eight states committed to preventing the continued deterioration of America's shrimp industry and to ensuring the industry's future viability. SSA serves as the national voice for the shrimp fishermen and processors in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Texas.

## Senator Vitter Press Release on Gulf Aquaculture

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### **Vitter Introduces Aquaculture Bill to Provide Relief to Struggling Gulf Fisheries**

*Bill would delay aquaculture permitting for at least three years, require thorough assessment of risks*

(Washington, D.C.) - U.S. Sen. David Vitter today introduced the Research and Aquaculture Opportunity and Responsibility Act, which would provide relief to struggling marine ecosystems, including those threatened by the recent Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

"It's clear that the marine environment, particularly off the coast of Louisiana, cannot handle any more stress as it begins its recovery from the ongoing oil spill," said Vitter. "My bill is a common-sense reprieve for these vital ecosystems that would allow us to step back and

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assess the potential effects on native species and recreational and commercial fisheries before moving forward with any further aquaculture programs."

Aquaculture is the industrial practice of cultivating certain species of fish and aquatic life in cages and designated areas within existing bodies of water. Evidence suggests that it may create an imbalance in otherwise healthy ecosystems and pose a threat to native fish species through pollution and overpopulation. The Research and Aquaculture Opportunity and Responsibility Act would require a broad assessment of the effects of various finfish aquaculture practices around the world.

Vitter's bill would delay the approval of plans, permits, rules and regulations for offshore aquaculture permits for a period of three and a half years. It would also require the U.S. Secretary of Commerce to conduct a thorough report of the environmental and economic effects of open ocean aquaculture, including the environmental effects on native fish species and the economic effects on the commercial and recreational fishing industries as well as coastal communities. Additionally, the bill would require a report on the economic potential of land-based aquaculture systems.

Vitter's bill has attracted broad support from environmental groups, commercial and recreational fishing associations and consumer advocacy groups.

"We applaud Senator Vitter for introducing legislation that guarantees a thorough review of open ocean aquaculture," said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of the national consumer advocacy group Food & Water Watch. "Given the current challenges facing the Gulf, it is important that we avoid introducing any additional factors that could jeopardize the region's socio-economic or environmental health."

