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## **Shrimp Importers Studies Discredited**

*Tarpon Springs*—This month, the Consuming Industries Trade Action Committee announced the creation of an interactive map to show the number of jobs that purportedly “are put at risk” by enforcement of U.S. trade laws. The Southern Shrimp Alliance notes that the information is extremely misleading and that the public, policymakers, and the media should not accept this report at face value. Requiring shrimp exporting countries to abide by the rules of free trade will not cause job losses in the trucking industry, grocery stores and restaurants.

“While the map is new, the numbers have been discredited before,” stated Eddie Gordon, President of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. “The study’s assumption that indirect jobs, such as wait staff and grocery store employees, are ‘at risk’ if there is fair trade is as ridiculous as it is offensive to workers struggling to survive against trade law violations.”

The ASDA/CITAC Shrimp Task Force attempts to lend credibility to their findings by stating that the data relied upon for the study is from U.S. government agencies. While the government provides raw numbers as to how many people work in grocery stores, warehouse clubs and restaurants, the government does not indicate the share of the workforce within these industries devoted to shrimp. The government data does not even distinguish Starbucks’s employees from Red Lobster’s employees. The assumptions and the factual basis for determining how many jobs within these industries would be “put at risk” if the alleged duty rates were implemented are not explained for critically thinking individuals who wish to evaluate the legitimacy of the study’s ultimate findings.

The American Seafood Distributors Association commissioned a study from the Thomas J. Murray and Associates in January 2003 to be used in a public relations campaign against the U.S. shrimp industry, which is pursuing its legal rights under U.S. antidumping laws and international agreements. The study commissioned from Trade Partnership, a DC firm that provides litigation support primarily for importers, appears to have relied upon the same information.

“If an apples-to-apples comparison is made between the U.S. jobs producing domestic shrimp products and U.S. jobs producing shrimp products from dumped imported shrimp, then by using the same numbers and same disputed assumptions, there would be 6.5 U.S. jobs saved for every job ‘at risk’ by fair trade,” explained Gordon. “Based on the logic of the ASDA/CITAC study, the domestic shrimp industry should claim that employees from International Paper, which supply boxes to domestic shrimpers and processors, and employees from Caterpillar, which build shrimp boats, are ‘put at risk’ by dumped shrimp imports.”

If the six countries being investigated for trade violations are found to be dumping shrimp, U.S. retailers and distributors will have the choice between purchasing fairly traded shrimp or shrimp subject to antidumping duties. Prior to the influx of dumped shrimp, most consumer prices for shrimp were lower than today according to data from Food Beat, Inc.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance strongly disputes the studies’ findings based on the unsubstantiated methodology and discourages the reliance or repetition of such inaccurate information without extensive explanation and qualification of the assumptions used to derive the biased claims.