



# The Shrimp e-Advocate

Newsletter

April 2008

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.

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## BREAKING NEWS

### Support Extensions of H2-B Visas

SSA urged members on Monday to contact their U.S. Representative (not Senators) to tell them why the H2-B Visa Returning Worker Exemption Extension is important to the shrimp industry and ask elected officials to support Congressman Charles Boustany's (R-LA) Discharge Petition that was introduced on April 1, 2008.

The "Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act," signed by President Bush in May 2005, made significant changes to the federal H2-B (non-skilled seasonal worker) visa program. Among the changes, it exempted returning seasonal workers from counting against the annual national cap of 66,000 visas permitted under the H2-B program. Unfortunately, this provision was only temporary and has to be extended each year. A one-year extension expired on September 30, 2007.

Legislation has been introduced in the Senate and in the House of Representatives to extend the provisions of the "Save Our Small and Seasonal Business Act." Efforts were made to include the provisions of these bills as an amendment to the comprehensive immigration reform legislation considered last spring. Congress, however, failed to pass immigration reform legislation. Senator Mikulski attempted to include an extension on spending bills. The provision, which unanimously passed the Senate, was removed in conference with the U.S. House of Representatives. Efforts to include the provision in the Economic Stimulus package also failed. Yet, the extension is critical to many shrimp businesses that need non-skilled seasonal workers.

## LEGAL UPDATE

### SSA Urges USTR to Appeal WTO Decisions

Last month, a World Trade Organization dispute panel

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ruled against the U.S. enhanced bond requirements on shrimp imports from Thailand and India and against the calculation used to determine the amount of dumping from Thailand. The WTO panel decisions are a significant barrier to enforcing U.S. trade laws because they severely restrict U.S. efforts to collect duties owed on unfairly traded imports.

SSA is working hard to convince the office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to appeal the decisions. We have raised the issue directly with USTR ([March 12 letter](#)), met with Members of Congress to encourage their communication with USTR, and used the media ([press release](#)) to put additional attention and pressure on the U.S. government's actions.

Senator Vitter (R-LA) hosted a meeting with USTR and SSA. In the meeting, SSA explained how the enhanced bonding program has been remarkably successful in increasing the U.S. government's capability to collect duties owed on shrimp imports. In total, less than 15% of duties on shrimp have gone uncollected. In contrast, more than 90% of duties have been uncollected on products like crawfish, garlic and mushrooms that are not subject to enhanced bond requirements. See a [comparison chart](#).

If you live in Louisiana, please take the time to thank Senator Vitter for his support on this important issue. Contact information can be found at <http://vitter.senate.gov/> in the left column.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### SSA Comments on Food Safety Legislation

John Williams spoke on March 26th with the Senate Energy and Commerce Counsel and senior staff about proposed food safety legislation. SSA was asked by the Committee to submit comments on the legislative initiatives proposed by the Bush Administration and Grocery Manufacturers Association. SSA's research into food safety systems in the European Union, Japan, and Canada, state seafood safety testing, and related issues has made SSA a valuable source of information for Congress on food safety issues.

### SSA to Testify Once Again

John Williams will be testifying before the [U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission](#) regarding the

impact of China's fishing practices and Chinese fish farms on the Gulf Coast shrimp industry. The Chinese Food and Product Safety field hearing is scheduled for April 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> in New Orleans. The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission is an official advisory body to Congress on policy toward China. John Williams has testified twice before Congress on food safety issues in the past six months.

## **REGULATORY UPDATE**

### **Fisheries Ecosystem Plan Revised**

SSA attended the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council meeting on March 3-6 regarding the development of a Fisheries Ecosystem Plan to protect various species of deep sea coral found along the east coast of Florida up to North Carolina.

The western boundary of the largest of the four "Habitat Areas of Particular Concern" was adjusted to follow the 400M depth contour based on new information learned during the Joint Deepwater Shrimp / Golden Crab AP meeting at Cape Canaveral. While the new coordinates are forthcoming, SSA remains concerned by one boundary of one of the four habitat areas that could unnecessarily impact the rock and royal red shrimp fisheries. SSA is seeking to have the boundary moved so the HAPC excludes a relatively small area that is not coral habitat, as evidenced by the traditional and current frequent use of shrimp gear in this area.

SSA will continue to provide comments on the revised proposal.

### **Rock Shrimp Amendment Finalized for Public Comment**

SSA was pleased with the South Atlantic Fisheries Management Council's proposals in March to eliminate the "Use It or Lose It" policies affecting the rock shrimp industry. The preferred alternatives for Amendment 7 include:

1. Removing the 15,000-pound rock shrimp landing requirement;
2. Reinstating all endorsements lost due to not meeting the landing requirement of 15,000 pounds of rock shrimp

in one of four consecutive calendar years;

3. Reinstating all endorsements for those who renewed their permit in the year in which they failed to renew their endorsement. Require rock shrimpers eligible to have their endorsement reinstated to apply for a limited access endorsement within one year after the effective date of the final rule for this amendment. This would only apply to fishermen who have had an endorsement at one time; and,

4. Requiring all South Atlantic shrimp permit holders to provide economic data if selected to do so.

The Council also introduced a new action to clarify that there would be two types of permits: (1) a limited access permit that would allow permit holders to fish throughout the range of the fishery (North Carolina through Florida) and (2) an open access permit that would only allow permit holders to fish in North and South Carolina. Vessels would only be allowed to hold one type of permit.

The finalized Amendment will soon be open for public comment.

### **Upcoming Gulf Council Meeting**

SSA will be attending the April 7-11 Gulf of Mexico Management Council meeting in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. On Wednesday the 9<sup>th</sup>, the Shrimp Management Committee will hear an update on shrimp vessel effort and a report on electronic logbooks for the shrimp fishery. If available, the committee will also receive a report from the Shrimp Advisory Panel.

In addition, the Gulf Council will be revisiting the issue of Operator Permits for Gulf fishing vessels, which including shrimpers. The Council will receive an update and analysis of the pros and cons of Operator Permits for various fisheries from Council staff. SSA will be monitoring and evaluating this closely to ensure that the shrimp fishery interests are protected.

Also of note, this is the final meeting for longtime Executive Director of the Gulf Council Wayne Swingle, who will be retiring after 30 years of service. Please join SSA in thanking him for his leadership and wishing him well in retirement. His successor has yet to be announced.

## **MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

### **Elections and Board Meeting Recap**

The SSA held elections for its Board of Directors at the March 29-30 meeting in Tampa, Florida. For each of the eight member states, one of the two representative seats was up for election. SSA welcomes back its returning Board members, as well as two new faces. We also thank Eddie Gordon for his years of service as he steps down to focus on his duties as executive director of Wild American Shrimp, Inc..

Eddie Gordon submitted his resignation from the South Carolina seat after six years of voluntary leadership, dating back to the formation of the organization. Eddie served as SSA's President from 2003 to 2005, during which time SSA filed and won six trade actions.

Kerry Abraham of St. Helena Island is South Carolina's new representative. Kerry is the captain of Miss Kathy, a 64-foot shrimping vessel, and has served as president of the southern chapter of the South Carolina Shrimpers Association.

In addition, Jonathan McLendon, co-owner of M & M Processing in Biloxi, Mississippi, joined the SSA Board as a representative of the American Shrimp Processors Association. Jonathan is a certified public accountant from a multigenerational shrimping family and will serve on SSA's finance committee.

The Board meeting also included presentations from Jones Walker on legislative activities; Dewey and LeBoeuf on trade actions, circumvention, and food safety issues; Glenn DeLaney on regulatory issues; and Wild American Shrimp, Inc. on marketing efforts. Special guests included Dr. Roy Crabtree of the National Marine Fisheries Service and Bob Jones of the Southeast Fisheries Association. The next Board meeting is tentatively scheduled for the end of July in Biloxi, Mississippi.

### **Come Meet with SSA**

SSA's Richard Vendetti is on the road again, reaching out to SSA members and non-members alike with timely information and updates. He visited Port St. Joe and Panama City and Pensacola the week of March 24<sup>th</sup> and he spoke to the Georgia Shrimp Association on April 1st in Midway, Georgia. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, he will be at the South

Carolina Shrimpers Association annual meeting in Charleston, South Carolina. Other visits during the last two weeks of April will include informal dockside meetings in North Carolina, including a formal meeting at Sneads Ferry (details to be announced). Finally, Richard will be attending the monthly meeting of the Shrimp Producers Association in Fernandia, Florida on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Please come out to see him if you can.

#### **WASI UPDATE**

##### **Famous Shrimper Timmy Cheramie Charms all in Coastal Living Article\***

Recognize that smile? Yes, that is famed Louisiana shrimper Timmy Cheramie's familiar grin in this month's Coastal Living. Timmy tells it like it is eloquently stating "Ask for Wild American Shrimp. If they don't have it, buy chicken. A nice piece of American chicken." If you haven't seen a hard copy, look for the article online at [www.coastalliving.com](http://www.coastalliving.com).

\*The titled has been corrected from the version provide by WASI and sent by SSA via e-mail on April 2, 2008.

##### **The WASI Road Show Coming Soon to a Town Near You**

In the first annual road show, Executive Director Eddie Gordon, Director of Operations Mario Piccinin, and Director of Marketing Joe Chiarella will be traveling throughout the 8-state region during the next couple of months. They will be showing presentations on WASI's activities, answering questions about the Certification Program, and providing insight on the overall push to increase the value of domestic, wild-caught shrimp.

##### **Biodiesel Workshop Answers Shrimper Questions About Going Green**

Co-sponsored by the South Carolina Sea Grant program, WASI recently hosted an educational workshop for shrimpers in the South Carolina area who interested in learning about the use of biodiesel for commercial marine vessels. With food trends moving towards buying local and sustainable, green issues like the use of alternative fuels is a hot topic in the press. Public relations that could

result from shrimpers using biodiesel in their boats would have a significant impact in helping to bring the shrimper story to thousands of consumers who care about the rising cost of fuel and the methods of our responsible commercial fisheries.

With over 40 attendees, the workshop was well-received and made it possible for those with questions to have face-to-face discussions with producers of biodiesel as well as shrimpers who are already using this alternative fuel in their boats. Topics covered fuel production, cost, distribution, engine operation, and much more. WASI is beginning to plan future workshops to take place in other locations throughout the 8-state southern shrimping community, so if you're interested in attending, please contact Kara Viacrusis at 843.937.0002 or via email at [kara@wildamericanshrimp.com](mailto:kara@wildamericanshrimp.com).

#### **Wild American Shrimp Booth Hopping at the Boston Seafood Show**

The annual International Boston Seafood Show was packed with seafood industry experts and professionals from around the globe and everyone wanted to taste certified Wild American shrimp. Product samples from ten different suppliers of certified Wild American shrimp were tastefully prepared and distributed by a professional chef from Chefs USA and the resounding response was "wow, those taste amazing!"