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**U.S. SHRIMP INDUSTRY DEMANDS
RELIEF FROM UNFAIRLY TRADED IMPORTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C.- The U.S. shrimp industry is asking its government to take swift action against imports of dumped shrimp from Thailand, China, Vietnam, India, Ecuador, and Brazil that are injuring the domestic industry.

Today the Shrimp Trade Action Committee, an ad hoc committee of vessel owners and shrimp processors, petitioned the Department of Commerce and the International Trade Commission to restore the conditions of fair trade in shrimp by imposing antidumping duties on shrimp imported from the six countries. The Mexican shrimp industry has also joined the call for fair trade and supports the trade action.

A variety of financial incentives provided by national governments and international institutions over a number of years have over-stimulated the infrastructure and production of farm-raised shrimp in these countries. This overproduction, coupled with import tariffs, controls, and occasional shrimp import bans by the European Union means that ever-increasing volumes of foreign shrimp are entering the U.S. market at ever-lower prices.

“The U.S. shrimp industry is in dire straits. Competitive and efficient companies are closing, unemployment is rising, and boats are being repossessed. The key reason is the high and increasing level of dumped shrimp imports entering the U.S. market,” said Eddie Gordon, President of the Southern Shrimp Alliance. “If the unfair practice of dumping continues, many more family businesses will fail, thousands more employees will be out of work, and many coastal communities will be devastated.”

In 2000, the value of the U.S. shrimp harvest was \$1.25 billion. Due to the flood of dumped imported shrimp from the targeted countries, the value of the U.S. shrimp harvest in 2002 plunged over 50 percent to \$560 million. For example, the average dockside price for one count size of Gulf shrimp dropped from \$6.08 to \$3.30 per pound over the same period. Meanwhile, during the same period, frozen wholesale prices for domestic shrimp received by domestic processors fell from \$6.45 to \$4.77 per pound. Employment levels of U.S. shrimp processors dropped over 40 percent during that same time period. An investigation by U.S. Department of Agriculture has found substantial price declines caused by increased imports of shrimp.

While the wholesale value of shrimp has dropped to the lowest levels in 40 years, the Wall Street Journal reported that the average price for a shrimp entrée at major restaurant chains actually *increased* by as much as 28 percent. Plainly, the consumer has not benefited substantially from the lower import prices and the domestic industry (shrimpers and processors) have not benefited from the higher prices paid by consumers.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance is an alliance of eight southern coastal states from North Carolina to Texas, representing the harvesters, processors, and distributors of American wild caught shrimp.