



## Southern Shrimp Alliance

P.O. Box 1577 Tarpon Springs, FL 34688  
955 E. MLK Dr. Suite D Tarpon Springs, FL 34689  
727-934-5090 Fax 727-934-5362

[www.shrimpalliance.com](http://www.shrimpalliance.com)

August 25, 2023

The Honorable Roy A. Cooper  
Governor of North Carolina

The Honorable Henry Dragan McMaster  
Governor of South Carolina

The Honorable Brian P. Kemp  
Governor of Georgia

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor of Florida

The Honorable Kay Ivey  
Governor of Alabama

The Honorable Tate Reeves  
Governor of Mississippi

The Honorable John Bel Edwards  
Governor of Louisiana

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of Texas

Dear Governors;

The U.S. shrimp fishery throughout the Gulf of Mexico and Southeast region is suffering an unprecedented catastrophic crisis that threatens its very existence and the many small family-owned businesses that are at the core of the economies of coastal communities throughout the region.

The global supply of predominately farm-raised shrimp has reached records highs and has far outstripped global demand. U.S. imports of frozen warmwater shrimp nearly doubled from 2013 to 2021 to an unprecedented level of 1.8 billion pounds. U.S. inventories of shrimp are overwhelmed; driving prices paid to shrimp fishermen to record lows that cannot cover the costs of a shrimp fishing trip – expenses further exacerbated by historically high fuel prices and inflation. Faced with the choice of losing money on a trip – or not being able to sell their catch at all – shrimp fishermen throughout the region remain tied to the dock with no income at the height of the season.

Last year, federal legislation was enacted, the “*Fishery Resource Disasters Improvement Act*” (“Act”), that substantially revised the statutory authority for the Fishery Disaster Assistance program administered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).<sup>1</sup> This new Act provides authority for the Secretary of Commerce in certain circumstances to make a determination of a “*fishery resource disaster*”, and defines that term to include a change in the fishery’s circumstances “*that results in significant loss of access to the fishery resource... for a substantial period of time and results in significant revenue loss...due to an allowable cause*”. An “*allowable cause*” is further defined to include a “*discrete anthropogenic cause*” including one “*that could not have been addressed or prevented by fishery management measures*” and “*that is otherwise beyond the control of fishery managers to mitigate through conservation and management measures...*”.

There are many details to consider, but we believe that the circumstances now faced by the U.S. shrimp fishery meet the criteria of the Act for the Secretary of Commerce to make a determination of a fishery resource disaster for the Gulf of Mexico and South Atlantic shrimp fishery. These circumstances have caused the fishery to lose access for a substantial period of time to what is among the most valuable of this Nation’s fishery resources. Such a determination would, subject to the availability of Congressional appropriations, make financial fishery disaster assistance available to our shrimp fishermen. The Act provides for the Governor of an affected State to submit a request for a fishery resource disaster determination to be made by the Secretary of Commerce.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance respectfully requests your staff carefully review the specific requirements of the Act and the circumstances faced by the shrimp fishermen in your respective states, and your consideration to collectively submit a region-wide request for a fishery resource disaster determination to the Secretary of Commerce. We would be happy to assist in any way we can.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Williams", written in a cursive style.

John Williams,  
Executive Director

---

<sup>1</sup> See 16 U.S.C. 1861a(a).