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## United States Senate

COMMITTEES:  
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FINANCE  
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RESOURCES

VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
March 20, 2024

Ambassador Katherine Tai  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17th St NW, Washington, DC 20508

Acting Commissioner Troy A. Miller  
Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave. Washington D.C. 20508

Ambassador Tai and Acting Commissioner Miller,

I write this letter to bring your attention to a recently publicized investigation into the Indian shrimping industry. As you know, my office has advocated strongly for the exclusion of Indian shrimp from US markets, including introducing S.2979, the India Shrimp Tariff Act which places tariffs on Indian shrimp. Through subsidies, sanitary cheating and dumping, Indian shrimpers are trying to drive Louisiana shrimp out of business. Specifically, the Outlaw Ocean Project's investigation, published earlier today, raises worrying concerns about the safety of shrimp imported from India into the US.

The investigation was based on the disclosures of a U.S. whistleblower, Joshua Farinella. Mr. Farinella, who has over 10 years of experience in the seafood industry, recently served as the general manager of Choice Canning Company's shrimp processing factory in Amalapuram, India where he witnessed both significant labor violations, including potential forced labor and deliberate shipment of antibiotic-positive shrimp in violation of FDA regulations.

Specifically, Mr. Farinella documented the withholding of wages to force individuals to work, restriction of workers' movements, lack of adequate time-off, the concealing of workers during external audits, the failure to abide by local minimum wage and pension scheme laws, and abusive and unsafe living conditions.

He also documented extensive food safety violations, including the repeated sale of shrimp tainted with illegal antibiotics to American supermarkets and the deliberate circumvention of traceability requirements for export to the U.S.

Because of these violations, Mr. Farinella resigned from Choice Canning in February 2024 and decided to share what he knew. He has filed formal whistleblower reports with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and Customs and Border Protection, and shared information with other federal agencies and the U.S. government. He has also shared a trove of documentation, including spreadsheets, text messages, emails, and recorded conversations, with The Outlaw Oceans project for their investigation.

Nearly forty percent of all shrimp imported to the U.S. now comes from India, and Choice Canning Co. is one of the largest Indian shrimp suppliers. Mr. Farinella's disclosures need to be urgently investigated, and he needs to be guaranteed full whistleblower protections.

Sincerely,



Bill Cassidy, MD  
United States Senator