

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1803

June 5, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
212A Whitten Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Secretary Vilsack,

I request that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiate the purchase of Gulf-caught shrimp under Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act. This program has been successfully implemented in 2020, 2021, and 2022, providing a lifeline during challenging times for the domestic shrimp industry.^{1,2}

Louisiana's shrimp industry is integral to both our state and national economies. As the leading shrimp harvester in the Gulf, Louisiana has led the United States in shrimp landings every year since 2000.³ However, the shrimp industry is also grappling with some of the lowest prices in recent memory due to a surge in imported product from overseas. It's disturbing that our shrimpers earn less than half of what they used to make. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that the domestic shrimp industry faces stiff competition from countries like Ecuador, India, Thailand, Vietnam, and Indonesia, which import billions of pounds of shrimp, often undercutting U.S. producers. Moreover, these imports are testing positive for illegal additives at an alarming rate of 32%, and they are not subject to the same rigorous inspection standards as American producers.⁴

Given the dire circumstances, I request that you reinstate the USDA Commodity Procurement program under Section 32 of the Agricultural Adjustment Act for the fiscal year of 2023. The program had a significant positive impact in prior years, facilitating the movement of products and putting many in the industry back to work. Further, it helped stabilize the price of domestic shrimp and provided financial support to fishermen facing adversity from imported seafood, inflation, and other challenges.

Reinstating this program is essential for providing a lifeline to our shrimpers. I trust that you will give this request your utmost consideration. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Respectfully,



Clay Higgins
Member of Congress

¹ <https://gulfseafoodnews.com/2022/06/22/congressmen-graves-and-carl-ask-usda-to-renew-domestic-shrimp-purchase/>

² <https://www.ams.usda.gov/content/pre-solicitation-announcement-section-32-purchase-shrimp-products>

³ <https://www.nationalfisherman.com/gulf-south-atlantic/texas-opens-its-waters-to-shrimp-trawling-on-july-15#:~:text=White%20and%20brown%20shrimp%20support,Gulf%20and%20the%20United%20States.>

⁴ https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/cms_ia/importalert_1153.html