



Southern Shrimp Alliance
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June 20, 2025

The Honorable Destin Hall
Speaker,
North Carolina House of Representatives

The Honorable Robert T. Reives, II
Democratic Leader,
North Carolina House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Hall and Leader Reives;

This is to express our strong support for the North Carolina shrimp industry and opposition to House Bill 442 which includes a provision that would prohibit the *"Taking or attempting to take shrimp using a trawl net in any coastal fishing waters other than areas of the Atlantic Ocean located more than one-half mile from the shoreline."*

As is painfully well understood throughout the coastal fishing communities in North Carolina and in the other seven shrimp producing states from Texas to South Carolina, the American shrimp industry is in a state of economic collapse. This tragic collapse, costing so many multigenerational family-owned small businesses and jobs that are at the core of the economies and culture of those communities, is the consequence of failed U.S. trade policies that have enabled cheap, unfairly-traded, and often illegally-produced shrimp imports to overwhelm the U.S. shrimp market.

The U.S. International Trade Commission recently reported that 93% of the shrimp consumed in the United States comes from overseas. In 2024, the U.S. imported 1.7 billion pounds of shrimp products, valued at \$6 billion. Due to the flood of imports, the value of the commercial shrimp harvest in the Gulf and South Atlantic was cut nearly in half from \$522 million in 2021 to \$269 million in 2023, while the value of North Carolina's shrimp landings dropped 43 percent from \$25 million to \$14 million.

The vast majority of these shrimp imports are farm-raised in countries with long histories of subsidizing their shrimp industries, and for using antibiotics banned by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) due to their harmful health impacts on North Carolina and all U.S. shrimp consumers.

Those shrimp imports produced in foreign fisheries are frequently associated with Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and whose conservation standards, such as protecting endangered species of sea turtles and sensitive marine habitats, fall far below that of the American shrimp fisheries.

Worse still, as has been extensively documented by such organizations as The Outlaw Ocean and the Corporate Accountability Lab, the integrity of the shrimp import supply chain - including foreign fisheries, shrimp farms, and shrimp processing facilities – has been severely compromised by the use of forced and child labor.

The Southern Shrimp Alliance (SSA) is proud of its long history of providing leadership in defending North Carolina's and all American shrimp fishermen, processors and associated shoreside enterprises that are facing this onslaught of shrimp imports, and so we ask you and your Members to please consider that the enactment of this legislation will only serve to further reduce the production by American fishermen of wholesome and sustainable wild shrimp and replace it with illegal and unfairly traded shrimp imports in the U.S. market. Stated otherwise, enactment of this legislation will reward those foreign countries for their abhorrent labor, conservation, and trade practices and align the legislation's supporters with them.

Throughout its 23-year history, SSA has also engaged extensively in applying the best available science to shrimp fishery management including habitat and protected resource conservation; often partnering with state and federal authorities in protected species and habitat conservation data collection and research that has rendered the American shrimp fisheries the most sustainable in the world. Rather than support this legislation, we ask you and your Members to consider instead taking the thoughtful and deliberate science-based approach to managing North Carolina's shrimp fishery that has, in our experience, been so rewarding to marine resources and habitats, our industry, and all stakeholders.

Finally, we call your attention to the President's recent Executive Order; *Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness*. The approach taken by this legislation and the adverse consequences of it are strikingly at odds with the President's stated objectives. We see this as a time in history to step-up and join the President and his nationwide movement to put our American fishermen - their families and their communities - first. We hope you and your Members will as well.

Sincere thanks for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "Williams" clearly distinguishable.

John Williams,
Executive Director