

Senator Roger Wicker
United States International Trade Commission
Hearing on Frozen Warmwater Shrimp from Brazil, China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam
Investigation Nos. 731-TA-1063, 1064, 1066-168 (Review)

February 1, 2011

Madame Chair, Commissioners, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of our American shrimp industry, which has a long history in my state of Mississippi and is a vital component of our cultural heritage. Ensuring a level playing field for all producers is important, and I strongly support continuing the antidumping orders on frozen warmwater shrimp from Brazil, China, India, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Shrimping creates thousands of jobs in the United States, providing a national economic impact that exceeds one billion dollars. In Mississippi alone, the industry has a positive annual impact of roughly 115 million dollars and directly provides employment for hundreds of Mississippians.

Extending antidumping orders is based upon the determination that renewed injury will likely result from unrestricted import of warmwater shrimp. These orders are in place because dumping was affirmed in the past and injury occurred. The domestic price of shrimp fell significantly because of unfair trade practices by other countries. As a result American jobs were wrongly lost, family businesses that existed for generations were forced to close, and local economies were hurt by these unjust imports. To all Mississippians, a return to that type of environment would be tragic and should be prevented.

The past decade presented many challenges for the Gulf Coast region. This plentiful area helps to meet America's food and recreation needs. However, we were devastated by Hurricane

Katrina in 2005, leaving many homeless, jobless, and fighting to keep their way of life. The storm's impact on the shrimp industry was grave. Many boats, docks, and processing facilities were critically damaged or completely destroyed. The marine ecosystem was highly disrupted, as habitats and nursery grounds essential for shrimp were devastated by violent currents and a catastrophic storm surge. Shrimp landings dropped considerably post-storm. According to Department of Commerce data, shrimp landings in Mississippi dropped from almost 18 million pounds in 2004 to just over 8 million pounds in 2006. Unfortunately, Katrina was not the only storm that impacted the Gulf of Mexico region. Ivan, Gustav, Ike, and other tropical events also negatively affected the region and our shrimp industry.

The 2010 tragic explosion of the Deepwater Horizon mobile drilling unit and the subsequent oil spill further impacted our Coast. Many industries, including those associated with our seafood production and sales were brought to a halt by the spill, by ensuing cleanup efforts, and by an uninformed perception of Gulf seafood. I heard first hand from Mississippi shrimp harvesters and processors during a town meeting last summer of the troubles they have experienced personally over the past years and their willingness to continue fighting for their industry and way of life. I believe some of them are testifying before the Commission today and will share their honest and compelling stories of hardship.

Ongoing tests and comprehensive monitoring have shown Gulf seafood is safe, and I am confident that fact will not change. To ensure safety of the harvest, federal and state governments instituted broad fishery closures lasting for months. At its maximum closure more than 36 percent of the Gulf of Mexico exclusive economic zone, an area greater than 88,000 square miles, was closed to all fishing. Restricted seafood harvest and misperception of Gulf

seafood products combined to drastically harm small businesses and workers along our Gulf Coast.

We do not know how last year's spill will impact landings in 2011 or for the foreseeable future. With this uncertainty, the assurance of a stable and fair marketplace is paramount and critically needed. It would be premature and ill-advised to let these antidumping orders lapse. I believe continuations of these orders are necessary for the domestic industry to rebound from the events that have plagued domestic production over the past decade.

These concerns of existing and future injury to the industry are not mine alone. They are shared by my constituents who harvest shrimp, as well as those who process shrimp, and by all Mississippians who base their way of life around wild-caught Gulf shrimp. My concerns are shared by my colleagues who testify before you today, and other colleagues who have written the Commission. I thank them for sharing their voices in this important review process. These concerns are backed by the Department of Commerce, who announced in December that revocation of these orders would very likely lead to dumping and negative impacts for our domestic shrimp industry.

Our country's shrimp industry is comprised of hard working and resilient individuals dedicated to continuing their way of life. A majority of them work to provide Gulf shrimp to all Americans. What they have endured since Katrina and last year's oil spill clearly shows their willingness and determination to carry on through the most daunting of challenges. They should be given the opportunity to confront these challenges in a fair marketplace. Your vote in support of retaining these orders will help individuals and small businesses across the Gulf Coast continue to rebuild and recover. Your support will help lead many of my constituents and our country out of these tough economic times.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.