

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 20, 2023

Troy A. Miller  
Commissioner  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Commissioner Miller:

Recent *New Yorker* stories reporting the prevalence of Uyghur and other forced labor in the harvest and processing of seafood in China expose horrific working conditions and extensive forced labor across nearly every facet of China's seafood supply chain. Alarming, this same seafood is finding its way into U.S. markets, which is unacceptable. Therefore, we urge you to use the full authority granted under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA) and Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930 (19 U.S.C. 1307) to investigate these reports and fully enforce violations of these Acts.

Under the UFLPA, it is illegal to import any goods, wares, articles, or merchandise mined, produced, or manufactured in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. In addition, under Section 307 of the Tariff Act of 1930, it is illegal to import into the United States any good derived, wholly or in part, from forced labor. Recent reporting clearly demonstrates that Uyghurs and other Muslim ethnic minorities in China are being forced to work throughout China's seafood industry.

The reports also highlight that Uyghur workers are being forced from their homes to facilities thousands of miles from Xinjiang under the Chinese government's Uyghur transfer program.<sup>1</sup> According to one article, since 2018, the Chinese government forcefully transferred at least 1,000 Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities from Xinjiang to work in ten large seafood companies in Shandong.<sup>2</sup> Five of the companies have exported over 47,000 tons of seafood to the United States since then, including 17% of all squid imported into the United States.<sup>3,4</sup>

In addition, we are also deeply concerned with evidence suggesting North Korean labor use in seafood plants in northeastern China.<sup>5</sup> According to the articles, three Chinese seafood-processing companies known to employ North Koreans have reportedly exported seafood to over a dozen importers in the United States.<sup>6</sup>

We are disturbed by the widespread presence of forced labor and human rights violations in the seafood supply chain and encourage U.S. Customs and Border Protection to use all relevant

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<sup>1</sup> Urbina, Ian. October 9, 2023. *The New Yorker*. The Uyghurs Forced to Process the World's Fish.

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/the-uyghurs-forced-to-process-the-worlds-fish>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Urbina, Ian. October 9, 2023. *The New Yorker*. The Crimes Behind the Seafood You Eat.

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/10/16/the-crimes-behind-the-seafood-you-eat>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

authorities to investigate, enforce, and penalize these and future violations. As we continue our work in Congress to reduce human rights violations and increase transparency in the seafood supply chain, we request the following documents as soon as possible, but not later than November 15, 2023:

- A document sufficient to describe the actions U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force have taken to prevent the import of seafood linked to forced labor.
- A document sufficient to describe any actions U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force take to develop and refine a strategy for targeting sectors, like seafood, that are likely to violate UFLPA or CAATSA.
- A document sufficient to describe updates on any strategies, investigations, and enforcement actions U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the Forced Labor Enforcement Task Force may take in response to these newly published allegations.

As the single largest importer of seafood in the world, the U.S. holds tremendous market power to drive the global changes needed to effectively address forced labor and human rights violations in the seafood supply chain. But, we must take the necessary actions to prevent and enforce human right violations and ensure seafood available to American consumers is not derived from forced labor.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. Should you have any questions, please contact Rachel Gentile with the House Natural Resources Committee at [Rachel.Gentile@mail.house.gov](mailto:Rachel.Gentile@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources



Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries