

Office of the Lieutenant Governor
State of Louisiana

BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



P.O. Box 44243
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70804-4243
(225) 342-7009

September 20, 2019

The Honorable Kevin Meyer
Lieutenant Governor, State of Alaska
550 W. 7th, Ste. 1700
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Lt. Governor Meyer:

As Chairman of the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), I was proud to introduce and receive unanimous bi-partisan support of a Resolution on the Inspection of Imported Seafood into the United States. The resolution calls for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take immediate measures to significantly increase the level of seafood inspections at the sites where it is harvested and at our borders. In addition, it calls on the United States to request every lot of imported seafood to enter our border with a full lab certificate ensuring compliance with our food and drug laws as well as imposing a five-to-ten-cent inspection fee, per pound, on all imported seafood, which would allow additional hiring of inspectors to ensure inspection of all imported seafood, excluding American seafood shipped overseas for processing and consumption in the United States.

Foreign seafood, especially those species harvested in aquaculture facilities, are often treated with large doses of antibiotics and other chemicals to treat diseases and enhance their growth. The United States remains the largest, and most open, market for contaminated shrimp; just one of the many species of imported seafood. Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development, today. These antibiotics can cause deadly forms of cancer and other diseases.

In 2017, seafood imported into the United States was valued at \$21.5 billion, yet the FDA inspects less than 2% of all imported seafood due to limited funds. The lack of inspection creates a tangible threat to our national security and the health and safety of American citizens. With a five-to-ten-cent per pound inspection fee imposed on all imported seafood, we could raise approximately \$600 million in additional revenue, hire approximately 12,000 additional inspectors, improve the quality of imported seafood, and decrease health risks.

This is not just a coastal issue. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the 2017 Top Ports by Volume and Value of Seafood Landed include Dutch Harbor, Alaska with 769 million pounds of imported seafood; Reedville, Virginia, with

Lt. Governor
September 20, 2019
Page 2

320 million pounds of imported seafood; Astoria, Oregon with 151 million pounds of imported seafood; and New Bedford, Massachusetts, with 111 million pounds of imported seafood.

I ask you to please let your Congressional Delegation know that this is a concern for your state, and that a bill should be authored in Congress, immediately, to address this national security issue for all American citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Billy Nungesser", is written over the typed name.

Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor

WHN/jm