



SOUTHEASTERN FISHERIES ASSOCIATION, INC.

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USDA to Host Listening Session of Catfish Rules Friday in Webster, Florida

SFA Members to Voice Concerns of Industry

August 24, 2017 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Food Safety Inspection Service will host a public “listening session” on new catfish inspection rules this Friday, August 25, in Webster Florida. Members of the Southeastern Fisheries Association (SFA) will join other members of the industry in voicing their concerns over the new rules, which threaten the future of wild-caught U.S. catfish.

On September 1, the USDA will implement new inspection rules for catfish. Designed for catfish imported from large fish farms in Asia, the rules will also apply to small, domestic fish houses that land wild-caught catfish. Many of these small-scale operations will be unable to absorb the costs that these new regulations will impose, which may force them out of the catfish industry completely.

“There is no reason that small, local fisheries should be treated the same as large, industrial fish farms,” said Bob Jones, Executive Director of SFA. “These new rules will unnecessarily hurt small, rural businesses and decrease the availability of U.S.-caught seafood.”

In addition to being a financial burden on many small catfish harvesters, SFA believes that these rules are also unnecessary and duplicative. The Food and Drug Administration already inspects imported seafood and ensures that it meets all health and safety standards. The new USDA program increases will increase the regulatory burden on many fishermen without producing better results.

The following members from the Southeastern Fisheries Association will be in attendance:

- Jimmy Hull – Chairman of the Board, Hull’s Seafood, Ormond Beach, Fl.
- Peter Jarvis – President, Triar Seafood, Hollywood, Florida
- Tony Lombardi – Vice President, Lombardi’s Seafood, Orlando, Florida
- Mike Merrifield – Fish Section Chairman, Wild Ocean Seafood, Titusville, Florida

- Jim Busse – Leadership Team, Seafood Atlantic, Cape Canaveral, Florida
- Ben Williams – Leadership Team, retired fisherman, dealer, processor
- Bob Jones, Executive Director, Southeastern Fisheries Association, Tallahassee, Florida

The listening session will be held from 10:00am to 4:00pm at the Florida Bass Conservation Center, at 2583 CR 788 in Webster, Florida.

About the Southeastern Fisheries Association

The SFA has served the commercial fishing industry for over 60 years. SFA's mission is to defend, protect and enhance the commercial fishing industry in the southeastern United States for present participants as well as future generations through all legal means while maintaining healthy and sustainable stocks of fish. SFA is headquartered in Tallahassee, Florida.

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