



March 20, 2015

The Honorable Barack Obama
The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to thank the administration for the bold measures embodied in the just-announced Action Plan of the Presidential Task Force on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Seafood Fraud, co-chaired by the Departments of Commerce and State. As the Action Plan recognized, IUU fishing risks the ecological health of our oceans, harms communities, and unfairly undercuts honest American fishermen. Our organizations participated fully in the public engagement process during preparation of the Action Plan, and we are particularly pleased to see strong provisions around catch information, traceability of product, enforcement at all levels, partnerships to enhance effectiveness, and international co-operation. This effort, coupled with the administration's dedication to eradicating international wildlife trafficking, represents a strong and serious commitment to environmental sustainability and to the future of nature, for which we are grateful.

The IUU Seafood Fraud Task Force's Action Plan, among other things, directs the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to use trade agreements to combat adverse ecological and commercial impacts caused by IUU fishing, seafood fraud, and harmful fisheries subsidies. We are pleased to note U.S. leadership in pressing for these types of significant environmental provisions in the developing Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement. The TPP's environmental provisions, if structured to be strong and enforceable, offer an important tool to promote the sustainable management of nearly one-third of the world's fisheries and to introduce measures to halt trade in illegally-taken seafood, wildlife, and timber that depletes natural resources and biodiversity in the Asia-Pacific region.

For our organizations, the most critical environmental provisions for the TPP include:

- Conservation measures that prohibit trade in illegally-harvested resources including seafood, wildlife and timber and wood products;
- A prohibition on subsidies that support IUU fishing or facilitate unsustainable fishing;

- Binding and enforceable environmental provisions through the same mechanisms as commercial obligations; and
- Binding commitments for TPP countries to adopt and implement:
 - The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and its associated Resolutions and Decisions (CITES);
 - Procedures reflected in the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate IUU Fishing to stop the landing of illegally caught seafood.

U.S. leadership has been essential for advancing these issues in the negotiations. If they are included with the same rigor in the final agreement, it will represent a significant advance for the environment.

To meet these obligations, some TPP countries will need capacity building and technical assistance beyond what is currently available through multilateral and bilateral support mechanisms. We welcome the attention the administration has already paid to the funding and provision of such support while recognizing that the TPP will introduce further demand.

WWF and Oceana are encouraged by the IUU Seafood Fraud Task Force's Action Plan and the proposed inclusion of strong conservation provisions in the TPP. The TPP could be a real opportunity to address issues at the heart of the destruction of the world's fisheries and illegal wildlife trade and we look forward to seeing this potential realized through inclusion in the final agreement of the strong environmental provisions championed by the administration.

We remain appreciative of the administration's leadership in working to change the economic incentives that drive unsustainable fishing, seafood fraud, wildlife trafficking and the illegal harvest of timber, and look forward to remaining engaged in helping fulfill the promise of these initiatives.

Sincerely,



Carter Roberts
President & CEO of WWF



Andrew F. Sharpless
CEO of Oceana

Cc: The Honorable Michael Froman, United States Trade Representative
The Honorable Kathryn Sullivan, Under Secretary, Oceans and Atmosphere, U.S. Department of Commerce
The Honorable Cathy Novelli, Under Secretary, Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment, U.S. Department of State
The Honorable Christy Goldfuss, Acting Director, Council on Environmental Quality
The Honorable Brian Deese, Senior Advisor to the President