



**Louisiana Shrimp Association
109 East 17th Place
Larose, La. 70373**

Dear Honorable Members of Congress and Mr. President,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing commercial fishermen, seafood producers, and coastal communities across the United States, we respectfully request immediate federal action to provide fuel subsidies or targeted fuel relief for our industry.

Together, our organizations represent thousands of American fishermen and seafood businesses who depend on access to affordable fuel to remain operational.

Commercial fishing vessels are entirely dependent on fuel to operate. Without it, boats cannot leave the dock, and American seafood cannot reach the market. Today, rising fuel costs are placing an unsustainable burden on fishermen—especially small, family-owned operations that are the backbone of our coastal economies and the communities our organizations represent.

At the same time, U.S. fishermen are competing against imported seafood from countries where fuel and operational costs are often subsidized. This creates a significant and unfair disadvantage for American harvesters and threatens the long-term viability of our domestic seafood supply.

In addition to fuel costs, fishermen are also facing rising expenses on essential gear and supplies, including tariff-impacted goods such as shackles, netting, and metal rope. Despite these increased input costs, domestic shrimp prices have not risen accordingly, leaving fishermen squeezed on both ends and operating at a loss.

We want to emphasize that the federal government already has proven mechanisms in place to deliver meaningful financial relief to fishermen. For example, under the CARES Act, fisheries assistance programs successfully provided direct payments to fishermen through NOAA Fisheries based on economic losses. Similarly, longstanding fishery disaster assistance programs have delivered aid to fishing communities impacted by economic hardship, natural disasters, and market disruptions.

These existing frameworks demonstrate that Congress does not need to create an entirely new system—only to adapt and utilize the tools already available. Fuel costs can and should be recognized as a qualifying economic hardship.

Additionally, it is important to recognize that the federal government already provides fuel-related support to several key American industries. In agriculture, farmers benefit from fuel tax exemptions and refunds for off-road diesel use. In aviation, federal tax structures and infrastructure investments help offset fuel-related costs and support the stability of air transportation. The energy sector receives longstanding tax provisions that reduce production costs, while transportation industries benefit from federally funded infrastructure and fuel-related policies.

These examples demonstrate that federal policy has long acknowledged the importance of managing fuel costs in essential industries. Commercial fishing is no different. Like agriculture, it is a food-producing sector that relies entirely on fuel to operate and sustain domestic supply chains.

At the same time, foreign shrimp producers continue to receive government-backed subsidies, tax incentives, and financial support that lower their operating costs—placing American fishermen at a clear competitive disadvantage.

We respectfully urge federal leadership to consider the following actions:

- Establish a federal fuel subsidy or per-gallon rebate program for commercial fishing vessels
- Provide emergency fuel assistance during periods of extreme price volatility using existing NOAA Fisheries distribution systems
- Expand fishery disaster assistance criteria to include severe economic impacts caused by fuel costs
- Implement tax relief measures or refundable credits tied directly to fuel usage for commercial harvesters

These solutions are practical, achievable, and could be implemented quickly using existing administrative pathways.

The commercial fishing industry is vital to our nation's food security, economy, and cultural heritage. In states like Louisiana and across the Gulf and coastal regions, generations of Americans have depended on these waters for their livelihoods. Without meaningful relief, many fishermen will be forced out of the industry, increasing our nation's reliance on foreign imports and weakening our domestic food supply.

We stand ready to work with your offices to develop and implement effective solutions that will keep American fishermen on the water and ensure the continued availability of safe, domestic, wild-caught seafood.

Thank you for your leadership and your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,