



BILLY NUNGESSER
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

POST OFFICE BOX 44243
BATON ROUGE, LA 70804

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Steve Scalise
U.S. House of Representatives
2338 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20152

Dear Congressman Scalise:

As Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana, I am writing to you to respectfully request that Louisiana Gulf Coast seafood products be added to the approved additional food purchases for the USDA. Our state produces \$2.4 billion annually in seafood and one in every 70 jobs in Louisiana is related to the seafood industry. Louisiana has had a thriving commercial seafood industry since the 1800s, in which catching and selling of crabs, shrimp, oysters, saltwater finfish, alligator, and crawfish have provided the livelihood for many families and communities. As the nation's second-largest seafood supplier, Louisiana provides an incredible array for superior-quality seafood to restaurants and homes across the country.

Our state was hit hard last year with the overwhelming amounts of fresh water coming down the Mississippi River, which significantly damaged our seafood production. The loss of harvested seafood for last year currently sits at over \$195 million. Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, we were eagerly awaiting a decision from Congress to appropriate funds to our state. These funds would have offset this flooding disaster and protected our seafood industry. Due to the recent shutdowns, purchasing has ceased causing three of our largest oyster processors to close, additionally, shrimp sales are down 40%.

Purchasing our seafood for this USDA program, is one way to help save our seafood industry, which is so important to our state. Our processors will open up their doors once again, and our docks will be buzzing with boats full of fresh seafood. The seafood industry is one of the hardest working and most enduring industries in our state's and country's history. Please allow them the chance to return to work successfully by granting them the opportunity to supply their products as an eligible purchase with the USDA.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important and essential request. If you have any questions or need information, please call me at (504) 657-9890, or contact Samantha Carroll, Executive Director of the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board.

Sincerely,

Billy Nungesser
Lieutenant Governor

Samantha Carroll
(225) 270-7482
scarroll@crt.la.gov