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1ST DISTRICT, ARKANSAS

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN OF
LIVESTOCK, RURAL DEVELOPMENT,
AND CREDIT

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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February 5, 2013

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The Honorable Rebecca Blank
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
14th Street and Constitution Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Secretary Blank:

I am writing in reference to the Commerce Department's 8th administrative review of the antidumping duty order on Certain Frozen Fish Fillets from Vietnam. The final decision, due March 2013, will have a critical impact on the U.S. farm-raised catfish industry, which provides thousands of jobs in the United States. In my district in Arkansas the industry has made significant investment in the Delta region, which is characterized by high rates of poverty and unemployment. I urge you to fairly vigorously and enforce our trade laws to ensure that the American catfish industry is not further damaged by the unfair practices of our trading partners.

The Department's decisions in recent reviews in the Vietnamese frozen fillet case have brought about a tremendous surge in the volume of imports. Since 2008 Vietnamese imports of frozen catfish fillets have tripled, and have taken more than 75 percent of the U.S. market. As a result, U.S. producers – who supplied 80 percent of the market when the case was filed – are now struggling to maintain just a 20 percent market share. This precipitous decline in the Nation's largest aquaculture industry is well documented in USDA statistics. In 2007, U.S. catfish farming covered almost 164,000 water acres. By January of this year, acreage had drastically shrunk to 83,020. This sudden and sharp decline directly correlates with the change in the Commerce Department's approach in the antidumping case and the subsequent and resulting flood of Vietnamese imports.

Beginning with the 3rd administrative review the Department began using a Bangladeshi surrogate value ranging from \$0.29/lb-\$0.43/lb. As a result, the Department has routinely calculated zero or near zero antidumping duty rates for Vietnamese frozen catfish fillets exporters. I believe there are more accurate options available for price index calculation, options that better reflect actual market conditions. The catfish industry has proposed for several years that the Department turn to the Philippines or Indonesia for determining the surrogate value because each of these countries is qualified and has better data available, including prices for whole live fish obtained by the governments of the Philippines and Indonesia, and published by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization and the Indonesian Government. The Department has found both

countries to be suitable surrogates and twice issued preliminary decisions using one of these countries, but later reverted to Bangladesh in its final determination.

U.S. trade laws enjoy broad support in Congress because they ensure a level playing field for U.S. producers and workers who compete in international markets. Without the fair and consistent enforcement of these laws, American goods face a significant disadvantage when competing with unfairly subsidized or dumped imports. I urge you to ensure that the Commerce Department fairly and vigorously enforces the antidumping order against frozen fish fillets from Vietnam.

As Chairman of the Subcommittee on Livestock, Rural Development, and Credit, my subcommittee has jurisdiction over issues affecting the farm-raised fish industry. The overall health of the catfish industry is among my greatest concerns, and I appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Crawford". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rick Crawford
MEMBER OF CONGRESS