



**TO** Interested Parties

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**RE:** Pacific Northwest Voter Support for Addressing Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing

**DATE** May 4, 2022

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Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of 1,812 likely November voters in the Pacific Northwest to assess views of Congressional action that would address illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing and associated human rights abuses in the global seafood industry.<sup>1</sup> The poll focused on three states in the region (Oregon, Washington and Alaska) that together are a powerhouse of seafood production in the U.S. The results show that **respondents view it as highly important for Congress to address the issue of illegal fishing, and overwhelmingly back legislation to address it.**<sup>1</sup> Support for the proposal cuts across every major demographic group within the region and remains robust after respondents hear pro and con arguments.

Detailed findings are as follows:

- **Respondents in Oregon, Washington, and Alaska are highly concerned about the impacts of IUU fishing.** As shown in Figure 1 below and on the next page, at least two-thirds of respondents label themselves “extremely” or “very” concerned about a range of negative impacts that stem from IUU fishing.

**Figure 1: Concerns About IUU Fishing Impacts**

*Here is a list of some of the problems that may occur as a result of illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. After I read each one, please tell me whether you find it extremely concerning, very concerning, somewhat concerning, or not concerning. (% Extremely/Very Concerned)*

Problem	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
Boats that fish illegally often get their crew through human trafficking and forced labor	83%	82%	84%
Illegal fishing can lead to fish species becoming overfished or threatened with extinction, and can cause destruction of coral and other sensitive habitats	75%	76%	84%

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<sup>1</sup> **Illegal fishing:** In this memo illegal fishing refers to IUU fishing and labor abuses in the seafood industry.

Problem	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
Fishermen who follow the law, including U.S. fishermen, are unable to compete with illegal vessels who save money by breaking the law	72%	74%	76%
Illegal overfishing causes the loss of a vital food source, particularly for low-income countries	67%	68%	74%

- Respondents broadly and strongly support Congressional action to address illegal fishing.** Given these concerns, they see it as urgent for Congress to take action – in fact, at least 86% rate it as “very” or “somewhat” important for Congress to address the issue. In each state, a solid majority rates the issue as “very important” to address – including a striking 70% in Alaska.

**Figure 2: Importance of Congressional Action on IUU Fishing**

*The US is one of the world’s top three markets for seafood. How important is it for Congress to act to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing?*

Importance	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
<b>Total Important</b>	<b>86%</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>97%</b>
Very Important	57%	56%	70%
Somewhat Important	29%	33%	27%
Not Too Important	8%	7%	1%
Not at All Important	5%	3%	1%
Don't Know	1%	1%	1%

- Overwhelming majorities back a legislative proposal to address the issue, with clear majorities offering “strong support.”** As shown in **Figure 3** on the following page, respondents were presented with a Congressional proposal that would help address illegal fishing and associated human rights abuses using three strategies: requiring companies importing seafood into the U.S. to document what species it is, where it was caught and using what kind of gear to verify that the law was followed; banning seafood imports from countries that allow illegal fishing and human rights abuses in their seafood industry; and expanding monitoring of fishing vessels so it is known when they enter waters that are off-limits for fishing.

**Figure 3: Support for Congressional Action on IUU Fishing**

*There is a proposal in Congress that would help address illegal fishing and associated human rights abuses using three strategies: Requiring companies importing seafood into the U.S. to document what species it is, where it was caught and using what kind of gear to verify that the law was followed; Banning seafood imports from countries that allow illegal fishing and human rights abuses in their seafood industry; and expanding monitoring of fishing vessels so it is known when they enter waters that are off-limits for fishing. Would you support or oppose this proposal?*

Opinion	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>89%</b>
Strongly Support	56%	58%	67%
Somewhat Support	29%	28%	22%
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Somewhat Oppose	5%	5%	3%
Strongly Oppose	3%	5%	4%
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>4%</b>

Support for this proposal cuts across demographic lines within each state, as shown below in **Figure 4**.

**Figure 4: Support for Congressional Action on IUU Fishing by Major Demographic Groups**

% Support	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
<b>Party</b>			
Democrats	91%	93%	92%
Independents	81%	84%	79%
Republicans	79%	80%	88%
<b>Gender</b>			
Women	88%	89%	90%
Men	80%	84%	83%
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
White voters	89%	90%	90%
Voters of color	77%	83%	79%
<b>Age</b>			
Under 50	85%	86%	90%
Age 50-64	84%	88%	88%
Age 65+	86%	84%	78%
<b>Education</b>			
Non-College	86%	89%	85%
College-Educated	85%	87%	91%
<b>Seafood Consumption</b>			
Weekly	87%	87%	83%
Monthly	85%	89%	90%
Less Often	84%	82%	87%

- The vast majority of respondents across state and party lines are much more likely to view their U.S. Senator favorably for supporting the proposal.** More than two-thirds in each state say they would view their Senator more favorably if they backed this proposal; fewer than one in ten would view them less favorably, as shown in **Figure 5**. These positive perceptions cross party lines to a remarkable degree in all three states: in Oregon, 88% of Democrats, 68% of independents and 57% of Republicans would view a Senator who supported this legislation more favorably. In Washington, the figures are 87% of Democrats, 55% of independents and 57% of Republicans, and in Alaska it is 84% of Democrats, 62% of independents, and 75% of Republicans.

**Figure 5: Impact of Proposal Support on Senator Favorability**

*Suppose that your U.S. Senator supported this proposal to require companies importing seafood to better document where and how it was caught; to ban seafood imports from countries that allow illegal fishing and human rights abuses in their seafood industry; and to expand monitoring of fishing vessels so it is known when they enter waters that are off-limits for fishing. Would that make you view your U.S. Senator more favorably or less favorably?*

View	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
<b>Total More Favorable</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>74%</b>
Much more favorable	33%	31%	34%
Somewhat more favorable	40%	37%	40%
Less favorable	8%	8%	8%
No difference/Don't know	19%	24%	17%

- Fighting human rights violations and enforcing higher standards for imported seafood are the most popular components of the proposal.** As shown in **Figure 6** below and on the following page, more than four in five respondents support every major element of the legislation. The most intense support is for strengthening enforcement against human rights violations such as human trafficking and forced child labor.

**Figure 6: Support for Elements of the Proposal**

*I am going to read you some potential elements of this proposal. Please tell me whether you would strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose each on.*

Element	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
Holding imported seafood to the same standards as U.S. caught seafood	94%	95%	95%
Strengthening enforcement against human rights violations such as human trafficking and forced and child labor	92%	93%	93%
Helping to stop seafood fraud, where a fish is intentionally mislabeled to make a consumer believe they are eating a different species, from a different region, or caught in a different way than it really is	91%	92%	92%
Increasing transparency of the seafood supply chain, so customers know where their fish was caught and processed	88%	93%	95%

Element	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
Identifying and holding accountable fishermen who violate international labor laws	87%	92%	92%
Collecting more data to help detect and prevent illegal seafood imports	87%	87%	90%
Requiring seafood importers to document and report more key details from the seafood supply chain for the fish they catch - knowing what species it is, where it was caught, and using what kind of gear	86%	88%	90%
Requiring all fishing vessels to be publicly trackable so it is known when they enter waters that are off-limits for fishing	85%	85%	84%

- **Support for the proposal remains overwhelming even after an exchange of pro and con messaging.** As shown in **Figure 7** below, over seven in ten respondents continue to support the legislation after hearing pro and con arguments – with around two in five “strongly” in favor.

**Figure 7: Support for the Proposal After Pro and Con Messaging**

*Having heard this, does this sound like something you would support, or oppose?*

Opinion	Oregon	Washington	Alaska
<b>Total Support</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>78%</b>
Strongly Support	40%	38%	42%
Somewhat Support	33%	33%	36%
<b>Total Oppose</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Somewhat Oppose	12%	11%	10%
Strongly Oppose	8%	9%	8%
<b>Don't Know</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>

In conclusion, **voters surveyed in the Pacific Northwest are highly concerned about IUU fishing, see it as important for Congress to act, and by a wide margin offer bipartisan support for a Congressional proposal to address such fishing and the various human rights abuses associated with it.** Respondents are especially enthusiastic about the proposal's provisions to address the human rights abuses in the global seafood industry and require that imported seafood meet the same standards as U.S.-caught seafood. Majority support for the proposal remains robust even after respondents hear a mix of positive and negative messages.

<sup>i</sup> **Methodology:** From April 11-26, 2022, FM3 completed 1,812 online and telephone (landline and wireless) interviews with voters likely to cast ballots in this November’s election (603 in Oregon, 600 in Washington, and 609 in Alaska). The margin of sampling error in each state is +/-4.0% at the 95% confidence level. Margins of error for population subgroups within each sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.