

Thank you Senator Markey, Chairman Menendez, and Ranking Member Corker, for having me this afternoon and for holding this hearing on international fisheries. I am privileged to serve, along with Senators Murkowski, Begich, and Wicker, as a Co-Chair of the Senate Oceans Caucus, which works to find bipartisan common ground on issues affecting our oceans and coasts, and the people and communities that rely on them.

One area we all agree deserves our attention is illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing; commonly referred to as pirate fishing. The work of our Caucus on this issue builds on the bipartisan tradition in the Senate of support for international fisheries management. Since the 1950s, the Senate has ratified at least fifteen international fisheries treaties with bipartisan support, not to mention additional amendments to existing treaties.

Fishing industries are integral to coastal economies. Indeed, in 2011, U.S. commercial fish landings generated \$5.3 billion and recreational anglers spent \$26.8 billion. At the same time, however, we are seeing estimated worldwide losses due to pirate fishing between \$10 and \$23.5 billion annually.

Pirate fishing puts fishermen and processors in our home states who are playing by the rules at an unfair disadvantage. Pirate fishing is conducted outside laws that protect the fishery, and by cheating they can operate at a lower cost and undercut the prices U.S. fishermen must set following the rules.

The problem isn't just local. Fish migrate. Pirate fishing in foreign countries, on the high seas, and even in our own backyard can jeopardize migratory fish stocks that our domestic fishermen rely on.

Quite simply, this is a problem we can't afford to ignore.

The “Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing” was adopted in response to this issue. It will allow the U.S. and other countries to bar pirate fishing vessels from entering ports and bringing their goods to market. Information sharing networks to track offenders and a compliance structure are also established under the agreement.

The agreement has strong support outside of this chamber. Here’s what Chris Lischewski, CEO and President of Bumble Bee Foods, has said:

IUU fishing is a multibillion dollar industry that undermines our global conservation and sustainability efforts. Illegal fishing penalizes legitimate fishermen and processors and it must be stopped. While the United States has done a good job at developing laws to detect and deter IUU fishing, other nations have not. We strongly support the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing because it creates an obligation for other nations to take action against IUU fishing.

Literally billions of dollars that could have gone into the hands of law-abiding fishermen and responsible seafood companies are lost every year. The Port States Measures Agreement gives us and others new tools to stop this thievery.

Three other treaty documents have also been received in the Senate during the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress relating to managing high seas fisheries. Fair control measures and enforcement at this scale allows us to protect our fishermen by ensuring the longevity of fish stocks.

The United States includes over 4 million square miles of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Arctic Oceans, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Caribbean Sea. Our fishermen and their industry partners can benefit from well-managed resources.

Bill Ruckelshaus and Norm Mineta, both previously high level political appointees in Republican and Democratic administrations respectively, Co-Chair the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative. They offer this thought in a letter I'd like to submit for the record:

Sustainable management of our ocean resources for current and future generations requires an international framework and a consistently applied rule of law across nations. Ratification of these treaties, taken as a whole, is an important step in this direction and helps affirm the role of the United States as a leader in protecting our global commons for the benefit and use of our citizens.

As Co-chairs of the Senate Oceans Caucus we express bipartisan support for the four pending international fisheries management treaties. We are now collecting signatures on a letter of support to Senate leadership.

The Senate should ratify these treaties, which are supported by the Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers, National Fisheries Institute, Ocean Champions, World Wildlife Fund, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and Environmental Defense Fund.

Thank you.