

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 26, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500-0004

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to you regarding the dispute with the Russian Federation over the situation in Ukraine and its unfortunate impact on our seafood and fisheries constituents. On August 7, in response to sanctions by the United States and the international community, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced a one year ban on the importation of food products from the United States, Canada, the European Union, Norway and Australia. This ban will harm numerous companies in the American seafood industry, including in the Alaska-based salmon, pollock and crab fisheries. Alaska produces over half of our country's seafood products, supports more than 63,000 direct jobs and contributes over \$4.6 billion to the state's economy.

Our purpose here is to ask that your Administration respond to the Russian action with a two-step process. First, we ask that you use all diplomatic means available to persuade the Russians to immediately rescind the seafood import ban. Second, if Russia fails to comply, we ask that a ban be imposed on Russian seafood imports to the United States. We do not make this request lightly as there is significant seafood trade between the two countries, but in light of the direct impact on our constituent's interests we believe it is necessary for the U.S. to respond quickly and emphatically. It was the Russian government that decided to use food, in addition to energy resources, as economic weapons, and inaction should not be an option.

In the event negotiations with Russia are unsuccessful and the U.S. does seek to impose a ban on Russian seafood products we must fully coordinate with our international allies who have also been targeted. This is especially important in the case of the European Union, which is a sizeable market for both U.S. and Russian seafood products.

Finally, if a ban is imposed, it is critical that U.S. trade officials implement it in a way which tracks and covers all Russian-origin products throughout the distribution chain, including those that are re-processed and or transshipped through third countries. This is the only way the ban will be truly effective and will achieve the intended goal of protecting U.S. interests.

We appreciate the Administration considering this request as part of our overall foreign policy response to recent Russian actions.

Sincerely,

		
Lisa Murkowski United States Senator	Mark Begich United States Senator	Don Young Congressman for All Alaska

cc: The Honorable John Kerry, Secretary of State
The Honorable Penny Pritzker, Secretary of Commerce
The Honorable Michael Froman, United States Trade Representative