

Advocacy Submits Comments on Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; Seafood Import Monitoring Program

On April 12, 2016, the Office of Advocacy submitted a letter to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration regarding the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act; Seafood Import Monitoring Program*.

- On February 5, 2016, NMFS published a proposed rule in the Federal Register to establish filing and recordkeeping procedures relating to the importation of certain fish and fish products, in order to implement the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act's (MSA) prohibition on importing and trading of fish that were taken, possessed, transported, or sold in violation of any foreign law or regulation.
- NMFS seeks to integrate catch and landing information and documents for certain fish and fish products within the International Trade Data System (ITDS) and require electronic data collection through the Automated Commercial Environment maintained by the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection. Under these procedures, NMFS would require an annually renewable International Fisheries Trade Permit (IFTP) and specific data for certain fish and fish products to be filed and retained as a condition of import to enable the United States to exclude the entry into commerce of products of illegal fishing activities. NMFS believes this information will help authorities verify that the fish or fish products were lawfully acquired by tracing these products from harvest to entry into commerce.
- NMFS estimates that there are approximately 2,000 importers and 600 entry filers of commodities that would be subject to the proposed reporting requirements.
- The Office of Advocacy expressed concerns that NMFS underestimated of the costs of complying with the proposal. NMFS asserts that the only new cost will be the industry wide cost of \$60,000 due to permitting fees. Advocacy asserted that the additional reporting requirements of the proposal were far more extensive than the current requirements. Advocacy encouraged NMFS to perform a full economic analysis of the potential costs.
- Advocacy encouraged NMFS to analyze all of the viable alternatives including third party certifications, a trusted trader program and the European Union's catch certification scheme.

For more information, visit Advocacy's webpage at www.sba.gov/advo or contact Jennifer Smith at 202-205-6943.

