



SCOTT PETERS

SERVING CALIFORNIA'S 50TH DISTRICT

“Caribbean and Latin America Maritime Security Initiative”

Background

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing undermines marine ecosystems, national economies, and food security worldwide. This practice directly threatens the economic and national security of the United States and its partners by illegally encroaching on the natural resources of sovereign states, challenging international norms, degrading the environment, and distorting legal trade networks. Congress [passed](#) critical anti-IUU legislation in 2019—the [Maritime SAFE Act](#)-- that established a whole-of-government approach which would support efforts to address global IUU practices.

Problem

In 2021, the U.S.-China Security and Economic Review Commission [identified](#) Chinese IUU fishing in the Western Hemisphere as another method Beijing uses to expand its influence in the region. China's distant-water fishing fleet operates extensively in Caribbean and Latin American waters engaging in a variety of problematic behavior, such as overfishing, encroaching on nations' exclusive economic zones, and threatening the legitimate trade and commerce between the United States and these regions. This coercion threatens the national and economic security of the U.S. and its partners in the region, disrupts regional trade, and contradicts international norms and law.

Solution

This bill would address these issues by:

1. Providing first-of-their-kind authorities for the Department of Treasury to sanction individuals and entities engaging in IUU fishing.
2. Enhancing cooperation between the United States Coast Guard, Navy, and related interagency partners with, and the maritime forces of countries in the Caribbean and Latin America;
3. Fostering the participation and coordination of the United States Coast Guard and, where appropriate, the United States Navy and other relevant Federal departments and agencies, in regional organizations dedicated to coordination and cooperation in support of the fisheries policies that align with customary international law and United States standards, ocean conservation, maritime security, and related initiatives of the Caribbean and Latin America;
4. Strengthening partner countries' maritime domain awareness, fisheries management, and law enforcement activities needed to counter IUU fishing in their waters; and
5. Documenting instances of private commercial entities or government-owned fishing vessels fishing without authorization within the exclusive economic zones of countries in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Contact Information

To learn more about this bill or cosponsor please contact Adam Taylor (adam.taylor@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Peters' office or Madison Hardimon (Madison.Hardimon@mail.house.gov) in Rep. Gimenez's office.