

# Chronological: Senate Commerce Hearing on the Global Overfishing and International Fisheries Management

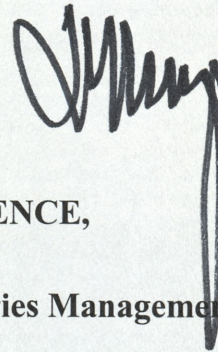
Senator Daniel K. Inouye Papers  
Speeches, Chronological, Box SP13, Folder 59  
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STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD  
BY SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
JUNE 12, 2003



SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

Hearing on the Global Overfishing and International Fisheries Management

STATEMENT

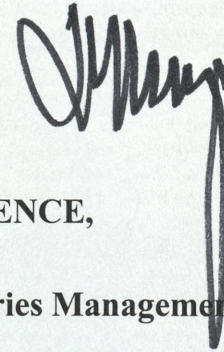
The issues of global overfishing and insufficient international fishing management are vital to our nation, and especially to Hawaii, where fishermen compete with numerous Asian countries' fishermen for the most abundant and nutritious fish. The United States is generally thought to be in better shape than most other nations, but fishing takes from China, Japan, and other Asian nations are increasing.

It is clear that many stocks in our Exclusive Economic Zone have been overfished. I think it is inappropriate to make overfishing statements that all the stocks are in peril. Within the United States, many stocks are in peril or efforts are underway to replenish diminished stocks, and there have been many success stories. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced in May of this year that four species were removed from the overfished list in 2002, and 70 other species that are overfished continue to recover under federal rebuilding plans. While our management regime is not perfect, we should take pride in the broad efforts of researchers and fishermen. Everyone involved with these issues is working very hard to rebuild depleted stocks and sustainably manage all stocks.

The major challenge to U.S. marine fisheries management and key frustration of U.S. fishermen is that U.S. fishing fleets are restricted -- and in some cases, prohibited -- from fishing on the high seas while foreign fleets are able to continue unimpeded. These restrictions force the costs of compliance with U.S. law upon our domestic fishermen, allowing foreign fleets to out-compete them with cheaper products harvested using ecologically damaging fishing practices. For example, in Hawaii, our longline fishing fleet is barred from harvesting the healthy swordfish stock on the high seas as a result of a judicial decision citing concern over interactions with endangered sea turtles. However, the larger longline fleets from other nations have continued to fish those same stock without protective measures, and so the restrictions from our domestic law have benefitted neither the sea turtles nor the U.S. fishermen.

Speech - June 12, 2003  
Commerce Cmte - Global  
Overfishing & Int'l Fisheries

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Hearing on the Global Overfishing and International Fisheries Management

STATEMENT

The issues of global overfishing and insufficient international fishing management are vital to our nation, and especially to Hawaii, where fishermen compete with numerous Asian countries' fishermen for the marine resources needed for nourishment and economic growth. While stocks in the Pacific are generally thought to be in better shape than Atlantic stocks, the increased fishing takes from China, Japan, and other Asian countries are starting to cause concern.

It is clear that many stocks internationally have been overfished, but I think it is inappropriate to make overarching statements that all the world's stocks are in peril. Within the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) major efforts are underway to replenish diminished stocks, and there have been success stories. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced in May of this year that four species were removed from the overfished list in 2002, and 70 other species that are overfished continue to recover under federal rebuilding plans. While our management regime is not perfect, we should take pride in the broad efforts of researchers and fishermen. Everyone involved with these issues is working very hard to rebuild depleted stocks and sustainably manage all stocks.

The major challenge to U.S. marine fisheries management and key frustration of U.S. fishermen is that U.S. fishing fleets are restricted -- and in some cases, prohibited -- from fishing on the high seas while foreign fleets are able to continue unimpeded. These restrictions force the costs of compliance with U.S. law upon our domestic fishermen, allowing foreign fleets to out-compete them with cheaper products harvested using ecologically damaging fishing practices. For example, in Hawaii, our longline fishing fleet is barred from harvesting the healthy swordfish stock on the high seas as a result of a judicial decision citing concern over interactions with endangered sea turtles. However, the larger longline fleets from other nations have continued to fish those same stock without protective measures, and so the restrictions from our domestic law have benefitted neither the sea turtles nor the U.S. fishermen.

**As the U.S. fishery management regulatory regime becomes more stringent due to the conservation-focused approach we have adopted, the failure of other nations to adopt similar measures will have growing economic and conservation implications to world oceans and fish stocks. We must address this problem before all the world's stocks are truly over-exploited.**

#### **QUESTIONS:**

##### **U.S. Coast Guard**

**Admiral Collins, in your oral testimony, you stated that the U.S. Coast Guard has only one cutter dedicated to patrolling the Bering Sea U.S. EEZ boundary. What dedicated platforms are being used to patrol the extensive Western Pacific EEZ boundaries?**

##### **Department of State**

**What sorts of actions can Congress take to assist efforts to make the international community take action and make real contributions to conservation efforts, rather than the empty rhetoric it currently offers?**

**What is the Administration doing to level the playing field for our domestic fishing fleets, particularly when our fleets are at a disadvantage as compared to the largely unregulated foreign high seas fleets, and the U.S. has some of the lowest tariffs in the world for fish imports.**

##### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Dr. Lent, in your written statement you say that the U.S. is a leader in longline gear technology development and transfer as it relates to sea bird and sea turtle research. Now that the U.S. has developed technologies to alleviate bycatch by longline fleets, what steps are being taken to export those technologies?**

**During oral testimony, it was said many times that the U.S. must lead by example to encourage other countries to comply with conservation efforts, yet our domestic fleets continue to suffer economic devastation while foreign vessels ignore most attempts at international fishing management. What is the Administration doing to level the playing field for our domestic fleets?**