

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC

20510

July 23, 2026

The Honorable Scott Bessent
Secretary of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

Dear Secretary Bessent:

The People's Republic of China (PRC) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) maintain a distant water fishing (DWF) fleet of between 2,000 and 16,000 vessels, which they direct to engage in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing at a scale that constitutes ecocide conducted via gross human rights abuses.

We write to urge you to counter Chinese IUU fishing by identifying the support vessels that enable the Chinese DWF fleet – reefer carriers, bunker tankers, and floating bases – and adding them on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List (SDN List) maintained by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), as well as adding known owners and beneficial owners. We have attached a list of 29 such vessels, and we reaffirm our commitment to providing you with the resources and authorities necessary to designate them and enforce such designations.

The Chinese DWF fleet is subsidized with billions of dollars from the PRC, and between 2022 and 2024 it accounted for 44 percent of global fishing across 110 million hours in the waters of 90 countries. Chinese ships are regularly caught having killed hundreds of critically endangered animals and thousands of illegally caught sharks, whales, and dolphins, and they have destroyed tens of thousands of acres of coral reefs. The fleet exploits forced laborers, who are subjected to physical abuse, malnutrition, overwork, and withheld pay, in some cases spanning years.

There is a bipartisan, bicameral, and interbranch consensus across the United States government that Chinese IUU fishing poses an acute threat to the U.S. and our allies, and that it should be countered. In July 2025, Congress passed and the President signed into law H.R. 1, which appropriated to the Coast Guard \$170 million for maritime domain awareness, technology which is critical to identifying and tracking Chinese IUU fishing vessels. In December, Acting PDAS for Ocean, Fisheries, and Polar Affairs Perry testified to the Senate Africa Subcommittee that China uses its fleet to “exploit [African] fisheries resources at all levels of the ecosystem and create ecocide.” In January, the House Select Committee on China released a report on Chinese IUU that concluded the CCP “wields the [DWF] fleet with the precision of a military command, fusing fishing vessels, state subsidies, processing plants, and overseas infrastructure into a unified geopolitical weapon.” In March, the Senate passed the Fighting Foreign Illegal Seafood Harvests Act, which would establish as the policy of the United States “to continue the broad

effort across the Federal Government to counter IUU fishing, including any potential links to forced labor, human trafficking, and other threats to maritime security.”

The United States has already imposed sanctions on persons and vessels involved in Chinese IUU fishing. In December 2022, OFAC sanctioned two Chinese individuals and the networks they controlled pursuant to Executive Order (EO) 13818, which targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuse and corruption. The action included adding over 150 vessels to the SDN List.

Such designations are normally crippling for vessels and their owners. Ships require flagging, financing, insurance, fuel, port services, customers to purchase their goods, and crews which themselves require food and medical care, and they have difficulty evading sanctions because they can be tracked through their automatic identification systems (AIS). DWF fishing vessels are in theory particularly vulnerable: they require significant fuel for long-distance travel, their crews operate in hazardous conditions and are disproportionately subject to illness and injury, and they must offload their catches in a port each time their holds are filled. Designated vessels find it extremely difficult, and in some cases functionally impossible, to secure those goods, services, and financing.

However, the CCP has developed an elaborate hub-and-spoke logistical network that both makes their fishing vessels more efficient and blunts the application of sanctions to those vessels. Chinese IUU fishing fleets travel with support ships that insulate their fishing boats from sanctions. Their fishing vessels transship catches to refrigerated reefers which then sell in bulk during port trips, enabling the fishing boats both to avoid ports and clear out their holds for further fishing. Tankers provide those vessels with fuel and floating bases provide their crews with medical care and other services. Meanwhile they turn off their AIS, stymying efforts both to detect sanctionable activity and to track already-sanctioned vessels. The network allows Chinese IUU fishing fleets to operate at sea indefinitely, with the fishing boats able to conduct activities without ever having to go to ports where they would otherwise be vulnerable to sanctions.

In any case, the sheer scale of the Chinese IUU fishing fleet renders untenable any effort to counter the fleet’s activities by designating IUU fishing boats.

The supply ships themselves – however – are in fact acutely vulnerable to American sanctions. They require access to ports and customers. They cannot indefinitely turn off their AIS, if only so they can be found by Chinese fishing vessels requiring their services, and must also conduct repeated rendezvous and enter ports. They are relatively limited in number, according to the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. 55 reefers accounted for nearly half of all transshipment events recorded during 2024 and 10 tankers represented 61 percent of all global bunkering activity.

Those supply ships participate in the human rights abuses and corruption that enable the Chinese IUU fishing fleet and should be sanctioned pursuant to E.O. 13818. Once placed on the SDN List, supply vessels will find it difficult to secure port services or insurance, and reefers specifically will have trouble conducting transactions for selling their cargo. Anyone linked to the vessels, including through beneficial ownership, will be exposed to reputational and financial

crime risks. The vessels would switch from being assets to liabilities, greatly complicating the ability of the CCP to continue their IUU fishing activities.

Known Chinese Supply Vessels

Vessel Name	IMO	MMSI	Flag
JASON	9377808	636017460	Liberia
SARONIC BAY	9462689	636019696	Liberia
SEALION	9377810	636014306	Liberia
HAI GONG YOU 303	9031507	371596000	Panama
OCEAN ACE	9014339	352004339	Panama
HAI XING	9291066	636019127	Liberia
WOJIN CHEMI	9272814	440373000	Republic of Korea
PROSPERITY 12	9916317	352986139	Panama
HAI ZHI RUN 7	9621223	352004040	Panama
XIN DA	9096777	667002488	Sierra Leone
NEEMO	8712269	457669000	Mongolia
XINGLONGZHOU 183	N/A	413436140	China
HAI BAO YOU 99	N/A	413221820	China
HAI GONG YOU 302	9148465	457652000	Mongolia
HAI GONG YOU 603	N/A	413625910	China
DA YUAN YOU 2	N/A	413249770	China
XING LONG ZHOU 377	N/A	413436560	China
XING FA	1063528	667001674	Sierra Leone
GOLDEN WEAL	1145039	352006302	Panama
TAI AN	1032529	352003150	Panama
VEGA	9186455	667002455	Sierra Leone
XIN XING 6	1131595	620800248	Comoros
LONG MEI	1061348	334924000	Honduras
UM AQUILA	9104304	667001915	Sierra Leone
SHENG HANG HUA 5	9617557	413470050	China
SHUN FA YOU 66	N/A	413602960	China
HUA CHEN 788	N/A	413349210	China
JIANGYOU 516	N/A	413801351	China
XIONG HAI	8801515	457487000	Mongolia

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ted Cruz", with a stylized, cursive script.

Ted Cruz
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Roger Wicker", with a cursive script.

Roger Wicker
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd Young", with a cursive script.

Todd Young
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom Cotton", with a cursive script.

Tom Cotton
United States Senator

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Andy Kim
United States Senator

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Chris Coons
United States Senator

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Dan Sullivan
United States Senator

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Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a cursive script.

Rick Scott
United States Senator