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Joint Initiative Commends Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Seafood Fraud Recommendations

December 17, 2014 (Washington, D.C.) – The Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing and Seafood Fraud recently released its recommendations for a strong and comprehensive framework to combat IUU fishing and seafood fraud. The Joint Initiative commends the Obama Administration and the IUU Task Force for demonstrating leadership in tackling an issue that undermines legitimate efforts to sustainably manage and conserve global marine species.

“The Joint Initiative applauds the Presidential Task Force’s emphasis on tracing seafood entering the U.S. to its source, both domestically and internationally,” stated Norm Mineta, Co-Chair of the Joint Initiative Leadership Council. “Black market fishing has significant adverse impacts on the U.S. fishing industry and U.S. fishermen by depleting stocks and introducing unfair competition on the global seafood market. These recommendations can help ensure that illegally harvested fish do not enter international commerce.”

While the Joint Initiative supports the efforts of the Task Force, it also recognizes that Congress has a key role to play as well. Despite progress, Congress was unable to enact the legislation to implement the Port State Measures Agreement on IUU (S.267, The Pirate Fishing Elimination Act). The Port State Measures Agreement, recently ratified by the US Senate, would require party nations to take a number of steps to combat IUU activity, including denying port entry and access to port services to foreign fishing and transport vessels that have harvested fish illegally.

Bill Ruckelshaus, Co-Chair of the Joint Initiative Leadership Council, stated “We endorse the Task Force’s recommendation that Congress quickly enact legislation that will allow the U.S. to affirm its role as a leader in protecting our global commons for the benefit and use of our citizens.”

The Joint Initiative stands ready to support and work with the Administration and Congress as they move forward to address IUU fishing and seafood fraud. The Task Force recommendations represent a significant step toward sustainable management of our ocean resources for current and future generations. For more information on the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and our work, please visit www.jointoceancommission.org or contact Laura Cantral at 202-354-6444.

The Joint Ocean Commission Initiative is a collaborative effort of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and Pew Oceans Commission. The primary goal of the Joint Initiative is to accelerate the pace of change that results in meaningful ocean policy reform.