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ILLEGAL RED SNAPPER AND TUNA
ENFORCEMENT ACT

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 283



MAY 21, 2025.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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ILLEGAL RED SNAPPER AND TUNA ENFORCEMENT ACT

MAY 21, 2025.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 283]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 283) to require the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and the Administrator of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to develop a standard methodology for identifying the country of origin of seafood to support enforcement against illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 283, the Illegal Red Snapper and Tuna Enforcement Act, is to mandate the Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology, along with the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to establish a standardized method for determining the country of origin of seafood. This will aid in combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, among other related objectives.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

IUU fishing activities violate national and international fishing regulations. IUU fishing is a global issue that threatens sustainable fisheries and ocean ecosystems. It also threatens U.S. eco-

conomic security and puts law-abiding fishermen and seafood producers at a significant disadvantage.¹

Red snapper is among the most regulated and profitable fish in the Gulf of America.² It is consistently being poached by Mexican fishermen who come into U.S. waters and then return to Mexico with their catch. These fish are then sold in Mexico or exported back to the United States.

One way to combat the Mexican export of poached red snapper back into the United States is to identify the country of origin of the fish when they are being imported into the United States at the border. By developing a field test kit that accurately identifies where in the Gulf of America the fish were caught, Federal and State law enforcement officers will be able to identify the origin of the fish and confiscate the illegally caught red snapper.

The tuna fishing industry also faces significant challenges, including frequent mislabeling of bluefin tuna, a highly prized and regulated species. International fishermen try to pass off foreign tuna for high-quality ahi caught by Hawaii fishermen.³ Seafood fraud is a widespread issue at various points along the supply chain.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROVISION

S. 283 would authorize the development of a chemical analysis that law enforcement agencies can use to determine the country of origin from which a red snapper or tuna originated.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 283, *Illegal Red Snapper and Tuna Enforcement Act*, was introduced on January 28, 2025, by Senator Cruz (for himself and Senators Schatz, Britt, and Tuberville) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. On February 5, 2025, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 283 reported favorably without amendment.

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S. 3879, the *Illegal Red Snapper Enforcement Act*, was introduced on March 6, 2024, by Senator Cruz (for himself and Senators Tuberville and Britt) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. On July 31, 2024, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 3879 reported favorably with an amendment (in the nature of a substitute).

¹“Understanding Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing,” NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/insight/understanding-illegal-unreported-and-unregulated-fishing>).

²Trump Administration, Executive Office of the President of the United States, Executive Order 14172, “Restoring Names That Honor American Greatness,” January 20, 2025 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/restoring-names-that-honor-american-greatness/>).

³“Seafood Fraud,” NOAA, National Marine Fisheries Service (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/sustainable-seafood/seafood-fraud>).

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The Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act,⁴ which became public law on December 20, 2019, establishes a whole-of-government approach to counter IUU fishing and related threats to maritime security, such as transnational organized crime, trafficking, and forced labor.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 283, Illegal Red Snapper and Tuna Enforcement Act			
As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on February 5, 2025			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	6	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

S. 283 would require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), in consultation with Customs and Border Protection, to develop a field kit to identify the country of origin of seafood to enforce regulations against illegal fishing. The bill would require the agencies to conduct pilot studies to develop a methodology for identifying red snapper and tuna and report those findings to the Congress. The bill also would authorize the Department of Defense to provide technical assistance to help other countries deter illegal fishing.

Under current law, NIST conducts related research on the chemical differences between farmed and wild caught salmon and shrimp. In 2024, NIST also allocated \$300,000 to develop methods using isotope ratio analysis to determine the origins of oysters.

Based on information from NIST, CBO expects that the agency would need \$2 million up front to purchase and upgrade equipment, two full-time equivalent employees at an average annual cost of \$600,000, and \$80,000 a year for other equipment and supplies. CBO expects the costs incurred by NOAA would be insignificant.

⁴The Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act was enacted as part of S. 1790, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020; Public Law 116–92, codified in 16 U.S.C. 8001 et seq.

After accounting for anticipated inflation, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$6 million over the 2025–2030 period; any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

TABLE 1—ESTIMATED INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION UNDER S. 283

	By fiscal year, millions of dollars—						
	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2025–2030
Estimated Authorization	*	2	1	1	1	1	6
Estimated Outlays	*	2	1	1	1	1	6

* = between zero and \$500,000.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Aurora Swanson. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported:

Number of Persons Covered

S. 283 will have a limited increase effect on the number or types of individuals and businesses regulated.

Economic Impact

S. 283 is expected to have minimal economic impact.

Privacy

S. 283 would not have a significant impact on the privacy rights of individuals.

Paperwork

The Committee does not anticipate a major increase in paperwork due to the passage of this legislation. The required report is aimed at better operationalizing the developed methodology.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In compliance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides that no provisions contained in the bill, as reported, meet the definition of congressionally directed spending items under the rule.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title.

This section would provide that the bill may be cited as the “Illegal Red Snapper and Tuna Enforcement Act”.

Section 2. Methodology for identifying the country of origin of seafood.

This section would define the terms “Administrator”, “appropriate committees of Congress”, “key agency leadership”, “red snapper”, “tuna”, and “Under Secretary”. It would also charge the National Institute of Standards and Technology and NOAA to develop a method for identifying the country of origin of red snapper and tuna. The method would be operationalized in the form of a simple field kit that law enforcement officers could use to sample both species and determine the country of origin of the fish in minimal time.

This section would also require a report to the appropriate committees of Congress 2 years after the Act is enacted sharing the methodology and the operational plan.

Section 3. Technical assistance for IUU fishing enforcement.

This section would allow the Secretary of Defense, in coordination with the Coast Guard, to use Department of Defense funds to provide technical assistance to other nations’ maritime forces to combat IUU fishing and transnational crime. Assistance may include deploying personnel, remote sensing, data analysis, and operational intelligence consistent with U.S. law. The authority would extend to the Coast Guard and partner nation personnel operating aboard U.S., partner, or international vessels to enhance global maritime security.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee states that the bill as reported would make no change to existing law.

