

Testimony of James Blanchard

Before the United States International Trade Commission

February 1, 2011

Good morning. I am James Blanchard, a third generation commercial shrimper from Louisiana. I started shrimping with my father when I was 10 years old and knew right away that was what I wanted to do. Three of my brothers have shrimp boats and my sister is married to a fisherman. Shrimping has given me the opportunity to provide for my family and start my children on the road to their own success. I have a son who manages a supply company, a daughter who graduated from Yale Law School, and another daughter who is a child psychologist.

I have my own boat and shrimp year-round. I have made several changes to keep costs down over the last several years, such as doing my own maintenance, installing a fuel efficient engine and upgrading equipment, including nets, to improve fuel efficiency.

Even with the help of the tariffs and cost reductions, the industry is not doing well these days. I have seen loading docks and processors disappear over the years, and the fleet keeps getting smaller. Because of this decline, it is more difficult and costly for me to get supplies, such as nets, ice and experienced crew members. There are even fewer fish houses where I can unload my catch.

I normally make 20 trips in a year, each lasting between a week and ten days. In 2010, I made three trips before the oil spill and only two after. Every day between May and September I worked to clean up the oil through the Vessels of Opportunity program.

After months of cleaning up oil, I am finally able to go out shrimping. I recently bought \$9,000 worth of supplies and was ready to go. Then came word that the dock was not buying

any more shrimp. I don't know why they aren't buying, but whatever the reason, I can't go shrimping and some of those supplies, like groceries and ice, will go to waste.

If the tariffs are removed, things would be even worse for us. Prices would go down further. More companies would disappear. Right now, many fishermen are very worried about the long-term impact of the spill. We did everything we could to help clean up the oil and save our fishery, but we just won't know if there will be long-term effects on our business until the spring.

I stay in the shrimping business because it is what I love to do. Shrimping once flourished in Louisiana – it should not become just another forgotten industry in this country. I ask that the Commission please keep the tariffs in place. Thank you.