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August 9, 2007

Ms. Mary Anne Calamas
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503
VIA email: Maryanne_calamas@omb.eop.gov

Dear Ms. Calamas:


For over 6 years the US Fish and Wildlife Service has attempted to enforce a rule banning the interstate transportation of black carp. American aquaculture farmers rely heavily on the black carp as the only biological means to control snails in their farms. These snails can damage catfish aquaculture farms and have a disastrous impact on the communities that are so dependent on the US Farm-raised catfish industry. Currently, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has not proposed viable or legal alternatives to control snail infestation currently served by the black carp.

This ruling will have a disastrous economic impact on over 80 percent of these aquaculture farms. At this time, the US farm raised catfish industry is facing an enormous threat from imports from Asia. For the first four months of this year, imports are up over 600% from 2006 levels, which represents over one-third of all US catfish consumption. Chinese imports are being dumped at prices well below the cost of production, and our domestic producers are simply trying to stay in business.

Recognizing the concerns that the US Fish and Wildlife Service may have, the catfish industry has proposed a solution that not only allows continued use of black carp, but also eliminates any threat of black carp reproduction in the event of accidental release into the wild. This entails the exclusive use of triploid fish which are sterile and therefore incapable of reproduction.

I respectfully, ask that you rule against the US Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed rule to apply the Lacey Act to black carp and employ the proposed triploid alternative. The current rule banning all black carp from intrastate transportation will have catastrophic affects on the state of Arkansas and the supporting industry of US Farm-raised catfish.

Sincerely,


MARION BERRY
Member of Congress