

November 20, 2015



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**Global Companies Respond to National Marine Fisheries Service  
Request for Comment**

**SAN DIEGO**—The Global Companies, Ocean Global, LLC, and Sea Global, LLC, filed comments today in response to the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) request for comments under its Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking NOAA-NMFS-2015-0088, after the rejection of the emergency rule petition made by Tri Marine Group.

According to the Global Companies, the largest U.S. Flag Tuna Fleet operating in the Western Pacific, supporters of the petition claim that without government intervention there would not be adequate fisheries supply for the canneries located in American Samoa. These claims have failed to materialize, as actual supply of tuna is more than adequate due to the purchase of raw material from foreign fleets, which do not operate under higher U.S. regulatory standards.

“We had to turn vessels away from Pago Pago because we were informed that cannery freezers were full through the end of the year,” said Global Companies Shareholder J. Douglas Hines. “Part of this oversupply was created by fish harvested by Korean and other Joint Venture vessels operating under Kiribati and PNG flags with no restrictions in the high seas, where the U.S. fleet is severely restricted. Much of that fish was harvested on fish aggregating devices (FADs), while at the same time our boats are forced to operate in distant fishing grounds on free schools of tuna at significantly higher costs.”

In addition to the operating cost imbalance between U.S. vessels and foreign vessels, tuna prices have fallen \$500 per ton since the end of the closures. According to Hines, “we are now at a point where the U.S. fleet will not be able to sustain operations in the Western Pacific. Without immediate government action to improve fishing opportunities for all U.S. vessels, the U.S. will forfeit the entire area to foreign interests that do not share America’s commitment to conservation.”

“So far, comments submitted to NMFS strongly endorse a course of action that would give the U.S. Fleet the historical fishing days that were given away in the past in the name of ‘conservation,’” Hines said.

In his November 19 comment letter to NMFS, Hines stated, “Under the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA), the U.S. should assert its historical rights and reclaim all the high seas days relinquished in 2013 and return the ELAPS days relinquished in 2009. This action is consistent with Sec. 202 (ii) of the MSA. We believe this authority is clear and would justify the U.S. reclaiming its high seas days and expanding fishing opportunities within the U.S. EEZ.”

“The Global companies and the entire U.S. Fleet appreciate the determination of the Departments of State and Commerce as they work through these issues,” Hines said. “We stand ready along with other American members of the tuna industry to support their efforts, but action must be taken soon if the U.S. distant water tuna fleet is to survive.”

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