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Reps. Markey, Frank Urge FTC to Investigate Fish Labeling

Questions to FTC Regarding Possible Unfair, Deceptive Trade Practices Follow Boston Globe Exposé; Markey Also Sends Investigative Letters to NOAA, FDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After a recent Boston Globe investigation that found rampant mislabeling of fish in grocery stores, restaurants and fish markets in Massachusetts, Congressmen Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.) and Barney Frank (D-Mass.) urged the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to launch an investigation into whether the practice could be an unfair or deceptive practice under Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act. In a letter sent yesterday to the FTC, Reps. Markey and Frank ask the FTC if the agency plans any action in response to the matter of fraudulent labeling practices for seafood, and if a violation is found to have occurred, what penalties would be applicable to the sellers of the mislabeled food product.

“Seafood fraud not only hurts consumers economically, when they pay more for a less expensive and desirable fish, but also has the potential to pose real health risks by obfuscating the true identify of seafood that a consumer may be allergic to or otherwise intolerable of,” write the Congressmen in the letter to the FTC. **“The practice of deceptive mislabeling is not only an attack on consumers, but also the American seafood industry that employs hundreds of thousands of Americans.”**

The letter to the FTC can be found [HERE](http://markey.house.gov/docs/2011_1031_ftc_letter_on_seafood_label.pdf).
(http://markey.house.gov/docs/2011_1031_ftc_letter_on_seafood_label.pdf)

Separately last week, Rep. Markey, the top Democrat on the Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over fishing and ocean issues, opened an investigation into the mislabeling of seafood. Rep. Markey sent investigative letters to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which manages fisheries and inspects seafood, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), which issues labeling requirements for food and oversees food safety.

The letter to NOAA can be found [HERE](http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/content/files/2011-10-27_EJM_Seafood_Fraud_NOAA.pdf).
(http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/content/files/2011-10-27_EJM_Seafood_Fraud_NOAA.pdf)

The letter to the FDA can be found [HERE](http://democrats.naturalresources.house.gov/content/files/2011-10-27_LTR_EJM_Seafood_Fraud_FDA.pdf).
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Rep. Markey will be exploring whether new Congressional legislation might be needed to ensure better inspection and labeling of fish products, especially those imported from foreign countries that do not have robust inspection and monitoring systems for labeling seafood.

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