



Tafuna, P.O. Box 1571  
Pago Pago, AS 96799  
Tel: (684) 699-4182/ (684) 258-1524/  
(684) 252-8549  
Fax: (684) 699-5108  
email: feli\_fisheries@yahoo.com

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November 02, 2009

Hon. Nick Joe Rahall II, Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman Rahall:

On behalf of the Feli Fisheries Inc. management, I am writing to support the 'American Samoa Protection of Industry, Resources, and Employment Act' or "**ASPIRE Act**". The survival of our company solely relies on the existence of the local fish processing industry. Our company provides direct delivery of tuna fish exclusively to Star Kist Samoa Inc. (SKS Inc.), mainly targeting the Albacore specie. Feli Fisheries, Inc. is a company based in American Samoa, owned and managed by residents of American Samoa and has operated its longline fleets in American Samoa waters for more than **10** years. We plan to continue our services to support the fish processing industry and help sustain economic development and stability for the territory of American Samoa.

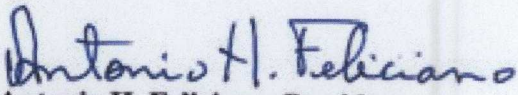
The proposed subsidy will be an incentive to revive and stimulate the American Samoa fishing industry as well as preserve American Samoa as a lucrative center for the tuna industry. Additionally, the "**ASPIRE Act**" will afford our U.S. territory to support the U.S. market and compete with other foreign fish processing industries. These foreign based companies conduct its operations in 3<sup>rd</sup> world countries, paying labor work at outrageously low wages thus allowing them a competitive advantage over a U.S. territory operated company; and, perhaps reaping substantial profits from the U.S. markets due to this benefit. The local fishing and processing industry remain the largest revenue for the American Samoa community and businesses. The American Samoa longline fishing fleets directly delivers fish to SKS Inc. and provides revenue to local businesses from expenditures on vessel re-fueling and re-supplying of food, fishing gear, vessel safety equipments, general supplies and spare parts; repair and shipyard services; stevedores; hotels and dining, and many other services. Star Kist Samoa Inc. accounts for the largest employment population in American Samoa.

We are in full support of the "**ASPIRE Act**" proposal, and we are willing to work with Congress and American Samoa's leaders to ensure continuity of what has been an endeavor providing jobs and stimulating the local economy, which in itself is at risk of collapse due to the recent global economic upheaval combined with rising minimum wage rates, which have in turn been a spark in the exodus of COSI Samoa Packing, and a sign of things to come, should we continue on the current path.



As president and owner of a longline fleet that fishes under a U.S. flag and licensed to fish in U.S. Territory waters, we want American Samoa to receive the direct and indirect benefits of its resources. We trust that the Congress will understand the profound significance of the "ASPIRE Act" to the survival of our fishing industry and to the American Samoa economy as a whole.

Sincerely,

  
**Antonio H. Feliciano, President**  
**Feli Fisheries Inc.**