

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3704

February 16, 2005

Honorable Richard G. Lugar
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to request the Committee give expedited attention to the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada on Pacific Hake / Whiting (Treaty Doc. 108-24).

The Pacific whiting fishery is extremely important to coastal communities in Oregon, Washington, and northern California. Because whiting are migratory and are harvested off the coast of both the United States and Canada, there is a need for cooperative scientific research and fisheries management to ensure that over-harvesting does not take place. Under the Pacific Hake / Whiting Agreement, a mechanism is established for joint research and assessment of fish stocks and allocation of science-based total allowable catch between the United States and Canada. Absent the Senate giving its consent to the Agreement, there is no formal means of ensuring that sound scientific management will be agreed to.

If Senate consent on the Agreement can be provided early this year, there will then be enough time for the Congress to consider the necessary implementing legislation and have it enacted prior to the start of the 2006 whiting fishery. I have agreed to work with the administration and my constituents on having that legislation considered.

The Pacific Hake / Whiting Agreement is widely supported and is a model for continuing cooperative fisheries management with our neighbors in Canada. I greatly appreciate any efforts you can make to expedite its consideration.

Sincerely,



Gordon H. Smith
United States Senate