

Lisa Sulka

*Mayor*

Larry Toomer

*Mayor Pro Tempore*

Stephen Steese

*Town Manager*



*Council Members*

Fred Hamilton

Dan Wood

Bridgette Frazier

Marcia Hunter

*Town Clerk*

December 12, 2023

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
State House  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

The Town of Bluffton Town Council respectfully requests your support of the local South Carolina shrimping industry by declaring an economic disaster due to the dumping of imported shrimp into the United States market, referred to as 'Shrimp Dumping'. Town Council unanimously approved a Resolution outlining the basis of this request earlier this evening.

The Town of Bluffton is a coastal community defined by its natural resources and sits on the banks of the May River, which is significant to the community for its cultural, economic and environmental importance. The tidal marshes of Bluffton provide highly productive nursery grounds for shrimp. Beaufort County and the Town of Bluffton account for nearly 25% of the annual amount of wild caught shrimp in the state.

The impact of shrimp dumping has jeopardized the local culture and economy associated with local fisheries. Due to this economic strain, many shrimpers are struggling to continue to keep their vessels afloat, employees hired and businesses open. A declaration of economic disaster would authorize the request for a fishery resource disaster determination to be made by the Department of Commerce and would allow for the imposition of controls. If controls were implemented it would make financial fisher assistance available to South Carolina shrimpers and have the potential of protecting lives and property by mitigating the threat of preventing the complete destruction of the State's shrimping economy.

Local shrimping is an integral part of not only Bluffton's character and State of Mind, but for all of South Carolina. For this reason and the others as outlined in the attached approved resolution we respectfully request your support in making this declaration.

Sincerely,

Mayor Lisa Sulka  
On Behalf of the Town of Bluffton Town Council

Enclosure (1): Resolution approved December 12, 2023

CC: U.S. Representative Nancy Mace  
Senator Tom Davis  
Representative Jeffrey A. "Jeff" Bradley  
Representative William G. "Bill" Herbkersman  
Representative Wm. Weston J. Newton