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Seafood

Canada Goes to WTO on Australia Salmon Ban 1999

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Report Highlights:

The GOC will request authority from the WTO to enable Canada to retaliate against Australia for its continued ban on imports of Canadian fresh, chilled and frozen salmon.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Ottawa [CA1], CA

CANADA GOES TO WTO ON AUSTRALIAN SALMON BAN

The following is taken from a News Release issued on July 5 by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Begin Text. International Trade Minister Sergio Marchi and Fisheries and Oceans Minister David Anderson announced today that the Government will be requesting authority from the World Trade Organization (WTO) to enable Canada to retaliate against Australia for its continued ban on imports of Canadian fresh, chilled and frozen salmon.

In 1998, a WTO panel ruled that Australia's ban was scientifically unjustified and discriminatory, and contrary to Australia's international trade obligations. An Australian appeal to the WTO Appellate Body failed. In February 1999, a WTO Arbitrator gave Australia until July 6, 1999, to implement the WTO rulings. On July 5, 1999, Australia announced that it would not be able to meet the July 6 deadline. Canada's position is that the WTO rulings oblige Australia to remove the ban.

"We are disappointed that Australia has not met the July 6 deadline," said Minister Marchi. "The WTO has ruled twice in our favour. It is important for all WTO members to meet their international obligations."

Minister Marchi said that Canada would be seeking authority that would permit Canada to impose a surtax on imports of certain Australian products. Under the WTO rules, Canada has until August 5 to request this authority.

"There are simply no reasonable grounds for maintaining this long-standing prohibition against Canadian salmon," said Minister Anderson. "Australia's alleged rationale for the ban -- fish health protection -- clearly has no scientific basis, as the WTO rulings show. It is time for Australia to remove the ban."

In the absence of compliance, the WTO provides that Canada and Australia may agree to compensation as a temporary measure until Australia implements the WTO rulings. If no agreement can be reached, Canada has the right to request authorization from the WTO to retaliate.

On May 29, the Government of Canada announced a 30-day consultation period with Canadians on a proposed list of products that might be subject to 100 percent surtaxes. The final list of products would be based on the comments received from the public and the level of retaliation authorized by the WTO Dispute Settlement Body.

End Text.