



WESTERN
PACIFIC
REGIONAL
FISHERY
MANAGEMENT
COUNCIL

11.B(1)

170th CM

170th Council Meeting

*Laniakea YWCA, Fuller Hall,
1040 Richards St.
Honolulu, HI 96813
Thursday, June 22, 2017
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.*

American Samoa Legislative Report

Port Scanner Legislation

In late 2016, the American Samoa Fono passed legislation for a new schedule of fees for businesses in American Samoa for the RapiScan X-ray system that was purchased with funds from the sale of the ASEDA bonds. Since the scanner system's launch in April, there have been concerns from the public.

The new law for business fees have been met with complaints from local businesses who have cited, among other things, that the \$200 per container fee is excessive, there are delays with the prepaid payment processing, and uncertainty over whether loose cargo should be paid by container or individually.

Logistically, there are issues due to the limited space available. When containers are being scanned, the Port entrance is closed off. Longer 40 foot containers provide even more difficulty given the small space available where the scanning occurs. Additionally, in a Port Users meeting, importers brought up their concerns regarding the possibility of radiation levels emitted from the scanner as being a concern. Port User meeting attendees said they wanted to have the government give them some kind of assurances that the scanners were safe, including on produce that is imported – a member of the Chamber of Commerce suggested documentation to ease the concerns of the public.

Even the Fono has voiced concerns since the last Council meeting about the new scanner system. One representative was critical of the Chief of Customs and Treasurer regarding the income from the scanners, given the \$6 million investment it took to purchase the system. The issue of expected revenue from members of the Fono also leads to potentially the most damaging issue of all with this scanner system. The government expects StarKist Samoa to pay the scanner fees for import and export of containers. This added fee would cost the company millions of dollars. This also seems to be in conflict with the company's exemption status. While the company is making its best effort to remain viable and continue to be the largest private employer of the territory, the government's insistence on this fee schedule puts the company at a severe disadvantage. This

also seems to be a direct contradiction to the government's stated priorities of supporting the tuna industry and fisheries development for the purpose of revenue generation.

Congresswoman Supports American Samoa in D.C.

Congresswoman Aumua Amata Radewagen has been very vocal about the need to remove fishing restrictions on US fishermen within the waters of the Marine National Monuments. She spoke with US Commerce Secretary, Wilbur Ross, about allowing this to happen, and finding a way to protect the resource while not jeopardizing economies and industries, such as the tuna industry in American Samoa. She stressed the size of the monuments in the Pacific, and how much area they took up in relation to the whole of the US Pacific Islands' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ), which was roughly 25%.

Also during a House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations hearing in Washington D.C., Congresswoman Radewagen made a request for the federal government to do a better job of soliciting input from the territories and tribal communities when it comes to decision making on federal environmental processes. She questioned whether the government is doing enough to consult the leaders of both US Pacific islands and Native American tribes. She was particularly critical of species being listed under the Endangered Species Act, and impacts that those listings or uplistings can present to the island economies and infrastructure.