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**Passage of Peru Trade Deal Endangers Consumers, Fails to
Benefit Farmers in the United States or Peru**
Statement of Food & Water Watch Executive Director Wenonah Hauter

WASHINGTON, DC - November 8 - "Today we commend the majority of Congressional Democrats and the handful of Republicans who stood with the farmers, workers, and consumers in their districts and voted against the flawed Peru trade deal, despite its final passage. Most Americans have rejected the free-trade mantra that has brought an onslaught of under-inspected food and consumer goods that too often have been dangerous or even deadly for consumers, their children and even their pets.

"Unfortunately, the passage of the Peru Free Trade Agreement will accelerate the importation of potentially unsafe food from Peru, especially seafood, without adequate import safety systems even to handle current imports. Already, U.S. seafood imports from Peru have more than doubled in recent years from 10 million pounds in 1999 to more than 22 million pounds in 2006. Although few imports are inspected, U.S. inspectors have already found Peruvian frozen shrimp laden with veterinary drugs or infected with salmonella, poisonous swordfish, as well as filthy Mahi Mahi and scallops. The Peru trade deal will only accelerate un-inspected fish imports into the United States.

"The Peru trade deal failed to even address agriculture and food security issues. The Peru FTA merely expands the flawed free trade agriculture policies that have failed to deliver for U.S. farmers. The volume of U.S. agriculture exports has been flat but imports have been surging. The United States already has a large and growing agricultural trade deficit with Peru that reached nearly \$400 million in 2006. Under the Peru agreement, U.S. farmers will face growing import competition from vegetable and fruit companies that relocate to Peru while Peruvian farmers are likely to be driven from their land from by low-priced American exports of food staples.

"Congress should oppose expanding the free trade agenda – including the Colombia, South Korea, and Panama pacts – until the U.S. inspection system is improved to handle increasing imports. Congress must give the Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Department of Agriculture the resources and authority they need to protect American consumers from unsafe imports."