

July 3, 2017

Sr. Luis Guillermo Solís Rivera
Presidente República de Costa Rica

VIA EMAIL

RE: Sale of Walmart's Suli Brand Tuna in Costa Rican Stores

Dear Presidente Luis Guillermo Solis Rivera:

We are writing this letter on behalf of the International Marine Mammal Project (IMMP) of Earth Island Institute, Centro Rescate Especies Marinas Amenazadas (CREMA), and Fins Attached Marine Research and Conservation - Costa Rica.

We wish to bring your attention to the sale in Costa Rican stores of the deceptively labeled canned tuna brand Suli, which is caught by Mexican tuna fishermen and canned in Mexico for Walmart Stores.

Suli brand tuna is being sold at considerable discount in Costa Rica, and with a very misleading "dolphin protection" seal that fools consumers into thinking that dolphins are protected during fishing operations.

Suli tuna is caught by fishing on dolphins, which deliberately involves chasing, harassing, netting, injuring and killing thousands of dolphins annually. It is a fishing practice that the government of Costa Rica has banned in nearshore waters of your country.

Walmart also sells Suli tuna in its other food stores in Costa Rica, including Sam's Club, Pali, Max X Menos, and Maxipali.

We raise the following concerns with the government of Costa Rica:

1. Should Costa Rica allow sale of tuna that harms dolphins?

More than 7 million dolphins have been killed since the late 1950's, based on estimates by scientists with the US National Marine Fisheries Service, by the method of fishing used to catch Suli tuna. As noted above, the government of Costa Rica has closed their nearshore waters to the netting and killing of dolphins to catch tuna. Should the government allow this deceptively labeled product on Walmart's shelves in your country? Costa Rica has a well-earned

reputation for protection of its environment. We believe this reputation is tarnished by the sale of Suli tuna in Costa Rican stores.

2. Suli Tuna has a deceptive dolphin protection label, amounting to consumer fraud.

In Spanish, Suli tuna has a deceptive label that claims “Tuna caught under dolphin protection standards”. Consumers in Costa Rica do not know that the “dolphin protection standards” of Mexico allow the deliberate chasing, harassing, netting, injuring and killing of thousands of dolphins annually. We believe this label should not be used on Suli tuna. Should the government of Costa Rica require truth-in-labeling Walmart’s Suli brand tuna to protect consumers from false statements?

3. Is Suli tuna being dumped in Costa Rica by Mexico?

We believe that Suli tuna is being sold in Costa Rica at discounted prices compared to other brands of tuna, most of which are truly Dolphin Safe and do not involve the targeting of dolphins to catch the tuna. Mexico is prohibited under US law from selling tuna caught by setting nets on dolphins with any form of label conveying dolphin safety protection. EU markets largely avoid all sale of Mexican canned tuna because of its negative impacts on dolphins. . Is Mexico, therefore, deliberately dumping their product in Costa Rica?

Thank you for your response to our concerns about Suli tuna. We encourage the Costa Rican government to protect the people of Costa Rica and Dolphin Safe tuna companies by taking steps against Walmart’s deceptively labeled Suli brand tuna.

The International Marine Mammal Project of Earth Island Institute is a nonprofit non-governmental organization that has worked to protect whales and dolphins for more than 30 years. You can view information about our organization on our website: www.SaveDolphins.eii.org

Fins Attached Marine Research and Conservation (www.finsattached.org) believes in the preservation of our world's precious resources and that through the protection of the ocean's apex predators marine ecosystem balance can be maintained for the benefit of all living things on earth.

CREMA (www.cremacr.org) is a Costa Rican NGO that works to conserve, manage and restore, populations of endangered marine wildlife in the Eastern Tropical Pacific, and is an elected member of the official Cocos Island Regional Conservation Area Council.

Please contact us if you need further information.

Sincerely,

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Sr. Mauricio Herrera Ulloa, Ministro de Comunicaciones (Communication Minister)

Dr. Felipe Arauz, Ministro de Agricultura (Agriculture Minister)

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