

The aim of the legislation, which was recently passed by Congress, is to streamline the process for the importation and export of all goods.

In a statement, International Fresh Produce Association Chief Public Policy Office, Robert Guenther said: “The bipartisan Ocean Shipping Reform Act (S. 3580) provides much needed relief for our nation’s ports, in particular for the fresh produce industry that relies heavily on reliable, efficient ocean transport of fresh produce.”

The Act will shift the burden of proof that leads to excessive “detention and demurrage” fees from exporters to ocean carriers and away from those businesses shipping goods who have no control over the cargo that is prioritized at U.S. ports.

“This legislation empowers the Federal Maritime Commission to broadly regulate ocean shipping and ensure the timely delivery of perishable goods at all levels of the fresh produce supply chain”, Guenther continued.

In addition, it aims to end the unreasonable practice of ocean carriers returning to foreign ports empty when they could be carrying U.S. exports, particularly those vessels capable of delivering agricultural products.

In conclusion, Guenther commented: “At a time of rising costs and high inflation, we applaud the passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act and [the] relief it will ultimately bring to fresh produce consumers and businesses.”

Passage of the Ocean Shipping Reform Act follows the recent IFPA Policy & Regulatory Forum last month, which saw hundreds of IFPA members advocate on Capitol Hill for final passage of this legislation among other policy priorities.

In April, IFPA was instrumental in creating a letter co-signed by more than 3 dozen organizations representing the produce industry urging the quick passage of the OSRA.

The White House has indicated that President Biden will sign the legislation into law immediately following final Congressional approval.

Click [here](#) to read a summary of the legislation.