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Seafood leads Alaska exports in record setting year

Alaska Seafood exports rose dramatically in 2011 to lead the state's increase in exports to a record \$5.2 billion. Seafood continues to be the number one category of exports from Alaska, and rose 35.1 percent to \$2.5 billion in value, comprising nearly half of total state exports, according to a recent announcement by Alaska Governor Sean Parnell.

UFA President Arni Thomson reiterated Parnell's recognition of the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, noting the broadening of export destinations and diversification of product forms as strategies that have improved income for fishermen and Alaska communities. For the first time, China was the State's leading seafood export destination, replacing Japan.

"Seafood exports to China rose dramatically, and 2011 continued a three year trend of steady increases in Korea, the Netherlands, and Canada. Japan seafood exports reversed a five year decline with a modest increase. Alaska's sustainable seafood is reaching a wider variety of destinations in a wider array of high quality product forms, and this directly benefits Alaska's communities that share in production," said Thomson.

"Long term actions by Alaska's leadership and Legislators have helped create positive results for Alaska fishermen, processors and communities. Tax credits for investment in value-added salmon products, loan programs for improved quality and energy efficiency, careful hatchery policies that boost salmon production while maintaining a priority for sustainability of naturally spawning fish, and long term marketing efforts all complement each other to help increase the strength of Alaska seafood in global markets. This investment pays off in jobs and opportunities and tax revenue to the State and Alaska communities," said Thomson.

In FY 2011, the Fishery Business and Resource Landing Tax that processors pay rose 16% from \$44.5 million to \$51.5 million, according to the State's Department of Revenue Annual Report. Half of this goes to the State General Fund and half is shared with communities and borough governments.

Over 40 Alaska communities have active commercial fishing permit holders and commercial crew licensees that equate to more than 20 percent of their total population according to our research," said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel. "Seafood processors employ over 25,000 workers in the state. Overall the Alaska fishing and seafood industry is a bright spot in the state's and in the nation's economy and employment picture, said Thomson.

United Fishermen of Alaska is the statewide umbrella association representing 37 member organizations from fisheries across the state and its offshore federal waters.

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Sources:

Governor Sean Parnell Press Release: Alaska Exports Reach Record Highs
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AK Department of revenue reports are online at
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<http://labor.alaska.gov/research/seafood/seafoodstatewide.htm>

AK Department of Labor Seafood and Fishing Jobs Info:
<http://jobs.alaska.gov/seafood/>