



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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December 3, 2015

Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
709 Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0202

Re: Support for re-creation of the American Fisheries Advisory Committee

Dear Senator Murkowski,

United Fisherman of Alaska (UFA), as you know, is Alaska's only statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 35 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the State and its offshore federal waters. UFA supports the recreation of the American Fisheries Advisory Committee to plan, advise and direct the Request for Proposal process for expenditure of Saltonstall Kennedy funds used in the NOAA grant program.

The Saltonstall Kennedy Act (SK Act) was created in 1954 for the purpose of aiding America's commercial fishing industry by "promoting the free flow of domestically produced fishery products in commerce and by developing and increasing markets for these products." Under the Act, the Secretary was authorized to appoint a group of experts from various industry sectors to advise the Secretary on industry needs and to encourage the use of SK funds accordingly. As responsibility for America's fisheries passed from the Interior Department to the Commerce Department, the American Fisheries Advisory Committee was lost.

Legislation in 1980 and 1981 directed NOAA to use 60% of the SK funds for their grant program. The agency has been able to circumvent the intent of this provision and has made limited annual funds available for the grant program. In light of ever increasing imports (92% of US consumption) and most recently the FDA decision to allow GMO products into the market with no labeling, the demand within industry to also address the needs of the market is at a critical level.

The American Fisheries Advisory Committee could work with the agency to bolster funds transferred to the grant program and would provide current "hands on" advice about industry needs. In addition, the Committee would take the lead in developing the annual SK grant program priorities as well as assessing the resulting RFP's for funding. The Committee's work would immediately and substantially impact American Fisheries for good.

UFA looks forward to discussing with you in more detail both the proposal for an American Fisheries Advisory Committee and the details of how such a committee would function and impact both Alaskan and American fisheries. If you or your staff have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact UFA.

Very truly yours,



Julianne Curry
Executive Director

CC: Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senate
Honorable Don Young, U.S. House of Representatives

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association
Alaska Independent Tendermen's Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association • Alaska Trollers Association
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas Inc.
Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United • Douglas Island Pink and Chum
Freezer Longline Coalition • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance
Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
United Catcher Boats • United Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association