



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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October 31, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Support for a standalone Vessel Incidental Discharge Bill

Dear Senators Murkowski and Cantwell,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) represents 34 commercial fishing organizations and over 400 individual fishermen participating in fisheries throughout the state and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast, as well as over 50 fishing related business members in Alaska and Washington state.

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) has long supported a permanent exemption to the over-burdensome EPA regulations requiring a permit for incidental discharge from commercial fishing vessels. The current three year temporary exemption is due to expire at the end of 2017 and we are concerned that there will not be a permanent exemption signed into law before then.

UFA would like to see a standalone bill introduced for the exemption of commercial fishing vessels from the EPA permit requirements for incidental vessel discharge.

UFA notes that recreational vessels, regardless of their size, are already exempt from the proposed permitting requirement. Numerous scientific studies have shown that incidental discharges from commercial fishing vessels do not pose a threat to the environment. While UFA is steadfastly in favor of protecting marine resources and ensuring a clean aquatic environment, we feel the proposed permitting requirements do not contribute to this. Rather, the proposed requirement would simply add additional unnecessary regulation to an already heavily regulated industry.

Thank you for your time and continued attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator