



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: PO Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Physical Address: 410 Calhoun Ave Ste 101, Juneau AK 99801

Phone: (907) 586-2820 **Fax:** (907) 463-2545

Email: ufa@ufafish.org **Website:** www.ufafish.org

June 18, 2019

Commissioner Kelly Tshibaka
Department of Administration
550 W 7th Ave, Ste. 1970
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Re: AS 05.25.055/ SB 92, the Derelict Vessels Act

Dear Commissioner Tshibaka,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast.

We respectfully ask that the implementation of AS 05.25.055/ SB 92, the Derelict Vessels Act be delayed until June 2020. The rollout of this bill was poorly executed, leaving state agencies and vessel owners scrambling to understand their respective responsibilities and effectively coordinate their roles.

When SB 92 was first introduced, UFA expressed its concern to both Senator Micciche and the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators that in order for this to be successful, there would need to be ample notice to vessel owners. We requested that vessels registered with the Commercial Fishing Entry Commission (CFEC) be exempt from this law because vessels registered with CFEC are entered into a state-managed database, which is one of the main objectives SB 92 set out to accomplish. Regardless if it was intentional or an oversight that CFEC registered vessels were not made exempt, the lack of notice to vessel owners has made compliance with this law extremely challenging.

Since becoming aware of this new law in late May, UFA has been working with the Department of Motor Vehicles and Alaska State Wildlife Troopers to understand how they intend to implement the requirements of the law. We have notified thousands of fishermen of the law's requirements through emails and social media posts. As far as we can tell, the commercial fishing industry, spearheaded by UFA, is the only sector currently actively working to inform commercial fishermen of the new requirements, even though this affects thousands of non-commercial fishing boat owners around the state. Who is informing them?

As fishermen attempt to comply with the law's requirements they are discovering that many DMV offices are not ready to deal with the onslaught of this new bill. Several DMV offices were lacking proper forms and stickers, and many DMV employees were confused by the new law and provided incorrect information to fishermen. In addition, many DMV offices are only open a few days a week and some have even been closed for a multiple weeks. Many fishermen were already fishing out in Bristol Bay and Prince William Sound when word of this new law reached them, and could not readily make it to a DMV office.

The UFA office has become a clearing house for frustrated vessel owners who want to comply with the law but are having trouble doing so due to DMV offices being closed in their region, offices lacking the correct forms, running out of sticker decals, and misinformation. We have spoken several times with the Director of the DMV, Marla Thompson, and have found her to be extremely helpful. She is doing her very best to help everyone meet the law's requirements, yet, due to the fact that fishing and boating season is in full-swing, it appears to be too much for many local DMV offices to keep up with.

There are still many questions left unanswered with this bill. What constitutes 90 consecutive days? If a boat goes up in a shipyard, does the 90 days start over? Does a seine skiff need to get a registration and title, or is that included with the main seine vessel? These are questions that law enforcement and the DMV have been asked, but have not answered. What are Bristol Bay and Prince William Sound fishermen supposed to do when their DMV offices are closed and they have made attempts to comply? These are just a few of the many questions that vessel owners have brought to our attention.

We understand the need for this bill and support the idea behind it, but its translation and implementation is currently flawed. We will be working with legislators next year to include language that CFEC registered vessels be exempt from compliance. In the meantime, we ask that this implementation of this law be postponed until all state agencies are better prepared and trained, and adequate notice and education are given prior to it going into effect.

Sincerely,



Matt Alward
President



Frances H. Leach
Executive Director

CC: Governor Michael Dunleavy
Amanda Price, Commissioner of Public Safety
Senator Peter Micciche
Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association
Alaska Trollers Association • Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United
Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Fishing Vessel Owners Association • Freezer Longline Coalition • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai
Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Crab Alliance Cooperative • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • Kodiak Seiners 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 Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
Valdez Fisheries Development Association