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UFA Re-affirms Endorsement for Lisa Murkowski for U.S. Senate

The United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA), representing 38 Alaska commercial fishing associations, reaffirmed its endorsement of Senator Lisa Murkowski for the United States Senate at its Board of Directors' meeting this week.

UFA endorsed Senator Murkowski prior to the primary election and reaffirmed its support for her write-in candidacy. UFA commends Senator Murkowski for her achievements on behalf of Alaska fishermen and fishing communities in her nearly eight years of service.

UFA recognizes Senator Murkowski's tireless work on behalf of Alaska fishermen. Senator Murkowski has demonstrated her unique ability to accomplish her objectives by seeking common interests amongst her peers in the United States Senate. She successfully aligned with west coast Senators for legislation that safeguards remaining salmon strongholds.

Fish farmers gained access to USDA Trade Adjustment Assistance and Senator Murkowski was instrumental in securing parity for Alaska fishermen in the program. Over 5,000 Alaska salmon fishermen benefited directly and are still eligible for educational benefits.

Senator Murkowski was instrumental in securing funds for harbor infrastructure which has benefited all users. Exxon Valdez settlement recipients had to wait 20 years and some still have not received payment, but the payments are not subject to self-employment tax and are eligible for tax deferral through one-time retirement account contributions, thanks to Senator Murkowski.

Senator Murkowski was instrumental in securing mandatory country of origin labeling, including wild and farmed labeling for fish and seafood. This achievement differentiates Alaska wild seafood in the marketplace and has contributed to increasing the ex-vessel price paid to fishermen. At this time during the campaign, Senator Murkowski is now working with a growing coalition of fishing organizations and related pure foods companies in an effort to stop the FDA permitting process for genetically altered salmon, a new high priority issue for the thousands of Alaskan fishing families.

Senator Murkowski, like her mentor Senator Stevens, has a firm understanding of the needs and unique challenges of Alaska's rural communities. Alaska provides over fifty percent of the volume and value of the nation's wild capture seafood. Commercial fishing families, and other small businesses in Alaska's rural communities have to overcome the lack of roads, energy grids

and the basic infrastructure that is taken for granted in the continental United States. Representing Alaska takes skillful leadership and the ability to persuade all parties of the importance of maintaining sustainable fisheries as well as safeguarding the habitat upon which the fisheries depend.

Senator Murkowski was honored in 2007 as UFA Person of the Year in Alaska Politics for her efforts in assisting Exxon Valdez oil spill claimants with tax treatment and retirement options for settlement payments. Recently, she helped tens of thousands of Alaska fishermen by extending a moratorium on EPA vessel discharge permit requirements which would have taken effect on July 31. Without this help fishermen would have needed to obtain discharge permits in the middle of their busy summer fishing season.

"This endorsement is in recognition of Senator Murkowski's record and her effectiveness in assisting Alaska's fishing families and businesses. Her stature in the Senate enables her to work successfully on our behalf covering diverse issues that affect thousands of our members," said UFA president Arni Thomson. "This endorsement is a testament to Senator Murkowski's diligence and tireless work on behalf of all Alaskans," continued Thomson.

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UFA Directors with Senator Murkowski at Fall 2010 Board of Directors Meeting, September 29, 2010. Photo courtesy of United Fishermen of Alaska.