



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

211 Fourth Street, Suite 110
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1172
(907) 586-2820
(907) 463-2545 Fax
E-Mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org
www.ufa-fish.org

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**Contact Mark Vinsel, Executive Director
(907) 586-2820**

UFA Supports Reestablishment of Alaska Coastal Management Program

The United Fishermen of Alaska has joined a growing number of coastal communities in adopting a resolution supporting reestablishment of an Alaska Coastal Management Program at its full board meeting in Homer last week. The resolution makes no reference to the initiative, or controversial points that led to a legislative deadlock and the cessation of the program.

“UFA’s focus is on the common interests of the fishing industry, and we all share the recognition of the need for the ACMP’s coordination of local and borough input into federal decision-making on coastal projects, and the federal funding that pays for the process,” said UFA Executive Director Mark Vinsel.

The resolution recognizes the program’s role in the identification and protection of fish habitat and as a communication forum for interaction between local, state and federal agencies and public stakeholder input on coastal development projects.

“Alaska, with over half of the nation’s coastline, and recognizing the importance of Alaskans’ input into federal actions, should not be the only state to willingly opt out of the program’s benefits and funding,” said Vinsel.

“The current ballot initiative activity by community leaders in Juneau, Kenai and Kodiak is one way to get the program reestablished, and if approved by the Lieutenant Governor in December there will be a very short window in which to obtain the needed signatures to get it on the ballot later this year. But the upcoming legislative session is an opportunity to get the program reestablished sooner – we hope that the legislature can take a fresh look and iron out their differences and get the program back as soon as possible,” said UFA President Arni Thomson.

“Alaska’s economy depends heavily on proper management of our resource-rich coastal regions,” Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association Executive Director and UFA delegate Bob Waldrop said, “and no one knows the value of Alaska’s coastlines better than the men and women who make a living from the water. They know we need a strong coastal management program.”

UFA represents 37 Alaska commercial fishing associations from fisheries throughout the state and federal waters offshore. UFA will hold its next board meeting February 14-16 in Juneau. The group’s resolution is available online at www.ufa-fish.org.

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