



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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## The American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act Heads to The Oval Office for Signature

**Juneau, AK-** United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) reacts to the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act's passing both chambers of Congress and its potential impact on the future of seafood marketing.

On April 26, 2022, Senator Sullivan's [S. 497, the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act](#), cleared the final step towards reality by passing the House and heading off to the President's desk for signing. This long-awaited piece of legislation was introduced to re-create an industry led committee to assist in the administration of fisheries marketing, research, and development grants we all know as the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant program (SK). The bill was cosponsored by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Ed Markey (D-Mass.), Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), and Raphael Warnock (D-Ga.) with longstanding support from UFA and many fishing groups across the USA that make up the National Seafood Marketing Coalition.

"Alaska has the healthiest and most sustainably-managed fisheries in the world thanks in large part to the dedication and insights of our fishermen, vessel owners, distributors, and processors," said Sen. Sullivan. "For too long, these Alaskans have not had a voice in directing the millions of federal grant dollars toward the priorities and needs of the fishing industry. No longer. Once my American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act is signed into law, our fishermen will again have a seat at the table to offer appropriate input and oversight of the Saltonstall-Kennedy grant process, identify opportunities for improvement and growth, and maintain Alaska's status as the superpower of seafood."

"I can't express enough my gratitude to Senator Sullivan, Senator Murkowski, the late great Congressman Young and the other bill co-sponsors for championing the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act over the finish line," said Matt Alward, President of the United Fishermen of Alaska. "This effort to restore the original intention of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act has been a priority of UFA for 20 years and it has taken a tremendous team effort over time to make it finally happen. We look forward to now putting this new team of folks together that will enable the SK grant funding to once again be directed by the U.S. Seafood Industry to what they feel will best have a positive and impactful effect on all aspects of the seafood industry."

The *Saltonstall-Kennedy (SK) Act* provides funding for fisheries marketing, research, and development. These funds are derived from a portion of fishery import duties. As part of the original SK Act, Congress authorized the American Fisheries Advisory Committee, a group of

experts from different segments of the nation’s fishing industry, to advise and direct funding towards addressing commercial fishing problems and needs. Following a 1972 law, the original American Fisheries Advisory Committee and all other advisory committees were disbanded. In the committee’s absence, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has been deciding, by its own criteria, what the grants focus on and who receives the grant funding. In many cases, the priorities of the fishing industry and Alaska fishermen do not necessarily match those of NMFS. The *American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act* will bring back that committee of experts, with members chosen regionally and across the various sectors of the fishing industry, to bring all aspects of the industry back into the process of identifying needs and funding priorities to address those needs.

“I am nearly at a loss for words to describe how excited I am that Senator Sullivan had the foresight to carry this great piece of legislation!” said Bruce Schactler, Director of the National Seafood Marketing Coalition and the long-time marketing committee chair of the United Fishermen of Alaska. “With a lot of help from Senator Murkowski and our awesome, late Rep Don Young as well as congressional and industry friends from all over the U.S., Senator Sullivan and his talented staff were able to develop and pass this most valuable American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act! We have done a great job of developing the nation’s wild caught fisheries and aquaculture production, but similar efforts on the “dry side of the dock” have not kept up with the rest of the world. Markets, new products and processes and much applied research of various kinds and direction is desperately needed,” said Schactler.

For many years, there has been discussion about the need for a national seafood campaign. With the re-creation of this American Fisheries Advisory Committee (AFAC) and with the proper, relative funding from Congress that is a specific part of the SK Act, that sort of campaign is now a distinct possibility. If commonly “directed’ by the industry, the AFAC can certainly facilitate the development and launch of such a campaign.

When asked about the potential impact of AFAC, Schactler said, “I believe that the new American Fisheries Advisory Committee has the potential to become one of the most powerful economic development tools for the U.S. Seafood Industry since the 200-mile limit.”

#### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association • Alaska Scallop Association • Alaska Trollers Association  
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Area M Seiners Association • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen’s Association  
Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development 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 • Fishing Vessel  
Owners Assn 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 • Northwest  
Setnetters 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 Southeast Alaska Gillnetters  
Valdez Fisheries Development Association