



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

January 31, 2023
For Immediate Release

Tracy Welch, Executive Director
(907) 586-2820

UFA 2022 Year in Review

Juneau, AK – United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) Releases the 2022 Year in Review

The year 2022 was a year for the record books for both the seafood industry and for UFA as an organization. UFA hit the ground running early in 2022 and continued that pace throughout the year. With continued and invaluable support from Senator Sullivan, UFA met with Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, NMFS Assistant Administrator Janet Coit, and the United States Trade Representative Ambassador Tai to advocate for Alaskan seafood. These were huge opportunities for UFA to highlight the seafood industry at a national level, in addition to continuing our state and local advocacy.

Early in the year, UFA had the opportunity to meet with Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo. Secretary Raimondo is ultimately in charge of NOAA Fisheries, and meeting with her provided a tremendous opportunity for Alaskan fishermen to directly educate her about their businesses, concerns and opportunities. UFA conveyed concerns about fishery disaster relief protocols and timelines, adequate funding for fisheries science and research, inequitable US trade policies with regard to seafood, Saltonstall Kennedy (SK) Act and grant program issues and potential solutions, and reiterated that any national aquaculture program must allow a state to opt out of any form of aquaculture they do not want off their shores. This initial meeting with Secretary Raimondo put the Alaska seafood industry's issues on the map, and resulted in several follow up meetings directly with the head of NOAA Fisheries, Assistant Administrator Janet Coit allowing UFA to continue to advocate on behalf of Alaskan fishermen.

In June 2022 Senator Sullivan invited UFA and ASMI to meet with Ambassador Tai, the United States Trade Representative. The U.S. Trade Office does not have an individual dedicated to seafood, and the meeting proved to be a great opportunity to provide the Alaska seafood perspective to Ambassador Tai in regard to US trade policies and their impact on the seafood industry. UFA highlighted the following points: (1) the need for increased focus on seafood as the USTR develops policy positions, (2) challenges with foreign seafood undercutting the domestic market due to duty-free or low import taxes, (3) China's failure to meet Phase One Commitments to increase import of U.S. seafood, (4) and several Alaskan flatfish products that were not permanently removed from the tariff list when all other Alaskan seafood was permanently exempted. We recently learned that Ambassador Tai granted a 9-month extension for tariffs on these flatfish products, which will provide time for additional industry comment to the US Trade Office regarding a long-term solution.

Throughout 2022, UFA continued its mission to promote and protect the common interest of Alaska's commercial fishing industry and was actively engaged on fisheries issues at a statewide level. UFA had a constant presence in the state capitol building in Juneau along with holding

many in-person and virtual meetings with legislators and their staff. We worked closely with legislators on legislation, submitted comments, and testified on behalf of the seafood industry on specific bills and confirmation hearings, and acted as a resource to legislators and staff. Several of our priority bills ended up being signed into law. In addition to following legislation, UFA also held in-person meetings and worked with the Department of Fish and Game on issues like disaster fund distribution plans and the Department of Environmental Conservation on cruise ship discharge issues. UFA also met with the new leadership at CFEC to discuss priorities and held educational webinars for our membership with groups like AMSEA and Alaskans for Better Elections. UFA had a presence at all of the Alaska Board of Fish meetings and continuously monitors and advocates on BOF issues.

At a national level, UFA continues to work hand in hand with Alaska's congressional delegation on fisheries issues. In 2022 UFA had multiple opportunities to meet with each member of the Alaska delegation, including Alaska's new Congresswoman, Mary Peltola. We continue to provide input on issues facing the industry and help to craft legislation that benefits our sector. For example, in meetings with the Alaska delegation, UFA raised awareness about the tender loadline issue which had the potential to drastically reduce the ability of many vessels to operate as tenders. We are pleased that this issue was recently resolved (at least for the next few years) through a legislative fix included in the Coast Guard bill. Also in the Coast Guard bill, we were able to include language that eliminated the Alternative Safety Compliance Program that the Coast Guard themselves have said they cannot comply with. For the past twenty plus years, UFA has been extensively involved in discussions to introduce and pass the American Fishery Advisory Committee Act (AFAC), which was signed into law in 2022. UFA is pleased that three of our board members were appointed to the 22-person committee that will be making recommendations for Saltonstall-Kennedy grant priorities and funding awards.

Finally, UFA maintained a strong presence at key industry events throughout the country, including ComFish in Kodiak, Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle, and ASMI's premiere media event promoting Alaskan seafood in New York City.

2022 was a banner year for UFA and we look forward to continuing that momentum in 2023! For more information on UFA, visit www.ufafish.org