



- Alyeska Seafoods
- Alaska Draggers Association
- Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
- Alaskan Leader Fisheries
- Alaska Pacific Seafoods
- Aleutian Islands Brown Crab Coalition
- Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
Akutian, Aika, False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, Nikol'ski, St. George
- At-Sea Processors Association
- Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.
Aleknagik, Clark's Point, Dillingham, Egegik, Ekwok, Ekwok, King Salmon, Lovelock, Manokotak, Naknek, Pilot Point, Port Heiden, Portage Creek, South Naknek, Tokeak, Twin Hills, Ugashik
- Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
St. Paul
- City of Unalaska
- Coastal Villages Region Fund
Chefornak, Chevak, Eek, Goodnews Bay, Hooper Bay, Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Kwigillingok, Mekoryuk, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nighthute, Oscarville, Platinum, Quinhagak, Scammon Bay, Toksook Bay, Tuntutuliak, Tununak
- Groundfish Forum
- High Seas Catchers Cooperative
- Icicle Seafoods
- McCarty and Associates
- Mid-Water Trawlers Cooperative
- Mothership Group
PV Excellence
 PV Ocean Phoenix
 PV Golden Alaska
- North Pacific Fisheries Research Foundation
- North Pacific Longline Association
- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
Brevig Mission, Diomedes, Eilm, Gambell, Golovin, Kayuk, Nome, Saint Michael, Savoonga, Shaktoolik, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, White Mountain
- Pacific Seafood Processors Association
- Prowler Fisheries
- Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference
- Trident Seafoods Corp.
- United Catcher Boats
Akutian Catcher Vessel Assoc.
 Arctic Enterprise Assoc.
 Northern Victor Fleet
 Peter Pan Fleet Cooperative
 Unalaska Co-op
 Unisea Fleet Cooperative
 Westward Fleet Cooperative
- U.S. Seafoods
- Waterfront Associates
- Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
- Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association
Atakanuk, Erimonak, Graying, Kotik, Mountain Village, Nunam Iqua

Press Release
 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW SENATE PROPOSAL " A MAJOR ADVANCE FOR THE NATION'S FISHERIES"

Bill promotes stronger science, conservation

Juneau, Alaska: A new U.S. Senate proposal to rewrite the nation's fisheries legislation with a stronger emphasis on science and conservation represents a major step forward for the nation's fishing industry and ocean protection efforts, Marine Conservation Alliance (MCA) Executive Director Dave Benton said today. The draft by the Senate Commerce Committee, chaired by Alaska Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK), was released this week.

"Sen. Steven's latest proposal to revise the nation's fisheries legislation is a major advance for the nation's fisheries," Benton said. "The bill strengthens the provisions that have responsibly managed Alaska's marine fisheries for almost 30 years and fostered a sustainable industry that provides thousands of jobs statewide."

Senator Stevens is the author and namesake of the federal legislation that has governed U.S. fisheries policy for nearly 30 years, the Magnuson-Stevens Act (MSA). MSA provides for localized decision-making via a regional council system comprised of scientists, fishing industry experts, conservationists, and community leaders. The MSA also provides the tools needed for ecosystem based management of fisheries, in which science guides conservation.

The bill's provisions to strengthen science and conservation and the current council structure will extend the reasons for Alaska's success across the nation.

"Alaska produces over half the nation's seafood and does so without a single groundfish species being listed as overfished," Benton said. "The reasons for that success include our strict adherence to scientific recommendations and the council's open, public process that brings industry and environmentalists; scientists and community leaders to the table."

Among its key provisions, Stevens' bill would:

- Retain and build on the regional fishery management council process that has worked so well in Alaska;
- Strengthen the role of science in the management process by requiring all regional councils to follow the recommendations of their scientific advisors when setting catch limits, and closing fisheries when those limits are reached;

- Create a needed fund for cooperative research programs like gear modifications that improve conservation, and help develop new technologies that improve the quality and value of fish landed; and,
- Improve data collection and fishery monitoring programs, and put more teeth into enforcement.

The bill also sets up procedures to resolve regulatory inconsistencies between the MSA and the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

“This would eliminate confusion and improve management by allowing for more rapid response to management and conservation needs,” Benton said. “Under the present situation, two different and often conflicting procedures apply to management decisions which can delay implementation for years. Quicker response means that conservation needs can be met sooner, and more effectively.”

The bill also establishes provisions for fishery quota programs to improve conservation and promote safety. “Such programs can be an important tool to reduce the catch of unwanted species, assist in protecting marine habitat, increase the value and quality of the catch, and promote safety at sea,” said Benton. “Undoubtedly some of the provisions will cause debate, but there will be opportunities to refine the proposal as it goes through the legislative process.”

The draft bill is result of a bipartisan effort by the staff of the Senate Commerce Committee, Benton noted. It is based on nearly 700 comments gathered in staff meetings and discussions with seafood harvesters, processors, and suppliers; environmental and recreation groups; other regional councils, federal and state and local governments including Alaska fishing communities; and the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy.

“By strengthening the role of science in management decisions and retaining the open, public process that has made fishery management here a model, Sen. Steven’s bill is good for Alaska and the nation’s fisheries and deserves our strong support,” Benton said.

The Marine Conservation Alliance is a coalition of seafood processors, harvesters, support industries and coastal communities that are active in Alaska fisheries. The MCA represents approximately 75 percent of the participants in Alaska shellfish and groundfish fisheries and promotes science based conservation measures to ensure sustainable fisheries in Alaska.

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