



# Marine Conservation Alliance

*promoting sustainable fisheries to feed the world*

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Adak Fisheries, LLC  
Alyeska Seafoods  
Alaska Crab Coalition  
Alaska Druggers Association  
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank  
Alaskan Leader Fisheries  
Alaska Pacific Seafoods  
Aleutian Islands Brown Crab Coalition  
Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association  
*Akutan, Adak, False Pass, Nelson Lagoon, Nikolski, St. George*  
At-Sea Processors Association  
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corp.  
*Aleknagik, Clark's Point, Dillingham, Egegik, Ekuk, Ekwok, King Salmon, Levelock, Manokotak, Naknek, Pilot Point, Port Heiden, Portage Creek, South Naknek, Toogak, Twin Hills, Ugashik*  
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association  
*St. Paul*  
City of Unalaska  
Coastal Villages Region Fund  
*Chelofmak, Chevak, Eek, Goodnews Bay, Hooper Bay, Kipruk, Kongiganak, Kwigillingak, Ilekoyuk, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nightmute, Oscarville, Platinum, Quinhagak, Scammon Bay, Toksook Bay, Tunutuliak, Tunurak*  
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 Longline Association  
Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation  
*Brevig Mission, Domeke, Elm, Gambell, Golovin, Koyuk, Nome, Saint Michael, Savoonga, Shaktolik, Stebbins, Teller, Unalakleet, Wales, White Mountain*  
Pacific Seafood Processors Association  
*Alaska General Seafoods  
Alyeska Seafoods, Inc.  
Golden Alaska Seafoods, Inc.  
Peter Pan Seafoods, Inc.  
Premier Pacific Seafoods, Inc.  
Supreme Alaska Seafoods, Inc.  
UniSea Inc.  
Wards Cove Packing Company  
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.  
Westward Seafoods, Inc.*  
Prowler Fisheries  
Trident Seafoods Corp.  
United Catcher Boats  
*Akutan Catcher Vessel Assoc.  
Arctic Enterprise Assoc.  
Mothership Fleet Cooperative  
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  
*Alakanuk, Emmonak, Grayling, Kotik, Mountain Village, Nunam Iqua*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 5, 2009

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## **MCA Supports Council Action to Close Arctic Precautionary approach warranted given pace of Climate Change**

The Marine Conservation Alliance (MCA), an association of fishermen, processors and communities involved in the groundfish and crab fisheries off Alaska, said it fully supports action today by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) to close all commercial fishing in waters north of the Bering Strait until a management plan is fully developed.

“Climate change is having a significant effect on the Arctic, opening previously ice-covered waters and drawing cold water species further north,” said MCA executive director Dave Benton. “The Council’s action to close these waters as a precautionary measure gives us the opportunity to conduct the scientific review necessary to develop a plan for how sustainable fisheries might be conducted in the Arctic in the future.”

The NPFMC action today concluded a nearly two-year process to take action while a management plan is developed for the waters north of Bering Strait. The precautionary approach closes roughly 150,000 square nautical miles to commercial fishing, and is intended to provide an opportunity to assess the impacts of climate change on Arctic ecosystems before any commercial fishing is allowed.

“MCA supports the opportunity to work with scientists, managers and the communities of the region to ensure that any fishing activity, should they occur, is done in an environmentally responsible manner that addresses local concerns,” Benton said. “Hopefully a similar precautionary approach will be adopted by other nations that border the Arctic.”

A Senate resolution passed last year (S. J. Res. 17) supported a halt to commercial fishing in the Arctic until agreement is reached on managing migratory, transboundary and straddling stocks among all nations bordering the Arctic including the United States, Canada, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Russia, and the European Union.

“The North Pacific Council’s science-based, precautionary approach to fishery management even in the face of such daunting challenges as climate change is another example of its world leadership in fishery management,” Benton added. In addition to supporting the precautionary closure of the Arctic, the MCA has taken other actions to support healthy oceans and sustainable fisheries:

- Successfully pushed to extend science-based fishery management across the nation during reauthorization of the Magnuson Stevens Act (MSA).
- Supported NPFMC action to protect Essential Fish Habitat in the Gulf of Alaska, Aleutian Islands and Northern Bering Sea. The amount of habitat area closed to bottom trawling now totals over 530,000 square miles, almost as large as the land mass of Alaska itself.
- Promotes the use of ecosystem-based fishery management practices by building on existing management actions and science programs, and through applied scientific research to find practical solutions to conservation issues.
- Published wheelhouse guides to help fishermen and other mariners avoid conflicts with northern Right whales, Short Tailed Albatrosses, and other seabirds.
- Coordinates cooperative research efforts between fishermen and scientists such as the effort that developed a successful prototype halibut excluder that reduced halibut bycatch by cod trawlers by over 50 percent.
- Coordinates marine debris cleanup efforts throughout Alaska, including the Southeast panhandle, Prince William Sound, Kodiak, the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands, and Norton Sound that has removed over one million pounds of mostly plastic debris from Alaska’s shoreline and earned NOAA’s Sustainable Fisheries Leadership Award for coastal habitat restoration in 2008.

The Juneau-based 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. For more information, click on <http://www.marineconservationalliance.org/>

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