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## Senator Lisa Murkowski on Fisheries

### *Summary*

Alaska's subsistence, commercial, and sport fisheries are major contributors to the state's economy. They symbolize our frontier way of life. Our State has the nation's most abundant fisheries, with an annual catch of nearly 5 billion pounds per year for the past two decades and an economic output of almost \$6 billion annually. As Alaskans, our continued success is the result of sound management that protects Alaska's natural bounty while providing a good living for so many Alaskans. Senator Lisa Murkowski is committed to keeping our commercial, subsistence and sport fisheries strong.

### *Science-based Management*

Access to rich fish populations is a powerful economic engine in more than one hundred coastal communities, employing thousands of fishing vessels and tens of thousands of workers in the fishing, guiding and processing industry throughout Alaska. Alaska's fisheries are among the best managed in the world. The state and federal agencies that sustainably manage Alaskan fisheries have done so with **science-based conservative catch limits, comprehensive catch accounting, a transparent public process and effective monitoring and enforcement.**

### *Key Membership on Senate Committees*

Lisa Murkowski is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee, **overseeing the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) budget**, including NOAA fisheries. She has **obtained funding for fisheries and marine mammal research and management, Yukon and Pacific Salmon Treaty implementation and, most recently, for the Yukon River Chinook salmon disaster**, declared in January by the Secretary of Commerce.

Lisa Murkowski also sits on the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee, **overseeing the U.S. Coast Guard's budget**, the service responsible for the monitoring and enforcement of fisheries, not to mention providing the vital service of search and rescue operations in Alaska waters. She has **continually fought to ensure the Coast Guard in Alaska is adequately funded** so that it can carry out its mission of both protecting our waters and keeping Alaskans safe.



### ***Clean Water Act Protecting Fishing Vessels***

Additionally, Lisa Murkowski also supports Alaska's fisheries and coastal communities by introducing beneficial legislation. Recently, a bill she sponsored, S. 3372, **extended a two-year moratorium on a Clean Water Act permit for incidental discharges from commercial fishing vessels**, including charter boats and other commercial vessels under 79 feet in length. The legislation extended the moratorium until December 2013, allowing time to work on a permanent exemption.

### ***Bill Providing for Capital Funding Credits***

Lisa Murkowski has also introduced legislation to reform the Capital Construction Fund, which will enable those with money in a capital construction account to **make a one-time withdrawal and exit the program without requiring investment in major upgrades or a new vessel**. They will be required to pay the taxes due, but not interest or other penalties, and can apply income averaging as well.

### ***Keeping an Eye on Endangered Species***

Lisa Murkowski is **constantly monitoring and engaging issues surrounding the Endangered Species Act**, including the listings of the Western Population of Stellar Sea Lions, the Pacific Right Whale and the Cook Inlet Beluga Whale. She has provided comments to the National Ocean Policy Task Force on marine spatial planning and is tracking the development of a national offshore aquaculture policy.

### ***Market Expansion Initiatives***

Lisa Murkowski has pledged to continue to work on other vitally important fisheries issues that can help our fishermen **expand markets for wild Alaska seafood**, including providing canned salmon to the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program, international food aid and school lunch programs. Lisa Murkowski is also engaged in efforts to create a **national seafood marketing initiative, increasing seafood safety and is always promoting the health benefits** of Alaska's abundant sustainable wild fisheries.

### ***Protecting Alaska's Fishing Interests***

Two years ago, Lisa Murkowski fought and won tax changes to allow Alaska fishermen to keep more of their long-overdue settlement money from the Exxon Valdez disaster.

Given all the issues facing fishermen, from high fuel prices to the growing burden of government regulation, Lisa Murkowski continues to work to protect the 54,000 jobs of Alaska's fisheries, seafood harvesting and processing industries which are vital to the continued well-being of our State's economy.

## ***Lisa Murkowski Delivers for Fishing Interests***

- Obtained Yukon River Chinook salmon disaster funding - \$5 million (2010)
- Yukon River Drainage Fisheries Assoc - \$100,000 (2009, FY10 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill).
- U.S./Canada Yukon River Salmon Agreement Studies - \$500,000 (2009, FY10 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill).
- Commercial Vessel Discharge permit moratorium – which excludes most Alaskan fishing vessels from onerous regulations that rightly apply to larger vessels. First passed in 2008 and an extension of the moratorium has passed the Senate in 2010.
- Secured Oil spill tax relief legislation to close the chapter on claims by oil fishermen in the wake of the EXXON Valdez disaster. Passed 2008.
- Bering Sea Crab Management and Research - \$300,000 (2009, FY10 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill).
- Eskimo whaling tax deduction to allow whaling captains to claim up to a \$10,000 per year charitable tax deduction to offset their equipment and fuel costs for the annual subsistence whale hunts in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas (2004 PL 108-357).
- Allowed fishermen to average their income for tax purposes (2004).
- Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund - \$80 million (2009, FY10 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill).
- Seal and Steller Sea Lions Biological Research - \$300,000 (2009, FY10 Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Bill).
- Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Education and Conservation in Alaska - \$200,000 (2009).
- Stellers and Spectacled Sea Eider Research - \$350,000 (2009).
- Co-sponsored S. 817, *Pacific Salmon Stronghold Conservation Act of 2010* to expand federal support for the protection and restoration of the healthiest remaining salmon strongholds in North America.
- Co-sponsored S. 1609, *Longline Catcher Processor Subsector Single Fishery Cooperative Act* to allow the freezer longline sector of the Bering Sea Pacific Cod fishery to form a coop with 90% of the active members electing to do so.
- Authored and won passage of the *Mercury Export Ban Bill* (2008, PL 110-414) to prohibit the export of mercury from the US starting in 2013 so as to protect lakes, rivers, oceans, streams, fish, wildlife and people and to establish a secure storage reserve to protect air and groundwater.
- Indigenous Peoples Council for Marine Mammals for research: \$500,000 (FY10 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill).
- Funded fisheries and marine mammal research and management.
- Funded implementation of the Yukon and Pacific Salmon Treaty.