



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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Chair Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Support for HB 31- Vessels: Registration/Derelict Fund

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. UFA supports HB 31: "An Act relating to the registration of commercial vessels; and relating to the derelict vessel prevention program fund."

HB 31 would remove the need for an additional unnecessary vessel registration with the Department of Motor Vehicles as required by the Derelict Vessel Act (SB 92) and provide an exemption for documented vessels licensed with the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC), thereby eliminating the need for duplicative registration.

One of the main objectives the Derelict Vessel Act set out to accomplish was to create a state-managed database that could be used to determine the ownership of abandoned vessels. A database for active commercial vessels already exists and is housed within CFEC. Currently, all active vessels participating in State fisheries and federal fisheries off the coast of Alaska are required to be licensed with the CFEC. CFEC licensing includes the owner's name, current address, vessel dimension, make, model, and a host of other identifying information about the vessel. During the yearly renewal process, owners are required to verify their contact and vessel information. These requirements and markings all contribute to being able to identify an individual vessel and its owner. All the information associated with a given commercial vessel is readily available to the public in a state-managed database that is easily searchable and consistently updated. Vessels licensed with the CFEC are already well documented with the State of Alaska.

We appreciate the delay in implementation and cooperation from the Department of Public Safety in trying to navigate this issue, but the problem still needs to be corrected. When the Derelict Vessel Act was enacted, DMV offices were not ready to deal with the onslaught of vessel registrations. Many offices throughout the state were lacking proper forms, decals, DMV employees were confused about the status of the new requirement or offices were simply closed. Here we are several years later, and the situation remains relatively the same; there continues to be confusion, uncertainty, and in some cases a shortage of supplies.

Adoption of HB 31 will still serve the purpose of the Derelict Vessel Act (which is to maintain a record of commercial fishing vessels in a state-managed database), while eliminating the need for duplicative registration and easing the burden on commercial fishermen here in Alaska.

Thank you,



Matt Alward
President



Tracy Welch
Executive Director

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 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