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Senator Gary Stevens

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SENATE BILL 211

The Alaska Master Fisherman Retirement Transfer Act

The Alaska Master Fisherman Retirement Transfer Act (AMFRT) is intended to address the greying of Alaska's fishing fleet. It would establish a system for experienced fishing captains (masters) to have a graceful means to phase themselves out and retire from the fishing industry, while simultaneously phasing-in their chosen journeyman, an incoming soon-to-be master.

It would provide for a very structured approach to transferring a Limited Entry Permit from one Alaskan to another, over time, with specific criteria and monitoring, and under the supervision of the master fisherman, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

Entering the commercial fishing industry in Alaska can often be highly problematic for young Alaskans wishing to become commercial fishermen. The AMFRT program should therefore not only serve our aging masters, but also young fishermen who desire upward mobility, a program that encourages opportunity, enables advanced training and applied, real-time experience.

Thank you for your consideration of this important and timely legislation.