



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 2, 2012

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chairman  
Representative Bill Thomas, Co-Chairman  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol,  
Juneau AK 99801

RE: Support for HB 261 Commercial Fishing Loan Program changes

Dear Chaimen Stoltze and Thomas,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the largest statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 37 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore waters. At our recent meeting, UFA Board members were able to observe and participate in the Young Fishermen's Summit (YFS), organized by the UAF Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program. We were impressed with the professionalism of the YFS participants and their dedication to continuing Alaska's successful fishing history as the next generation of skippers at the wheel. With ever increasing costs of vessels, equipment, and permits, UFA recognizes that the limits of financing that worked in the past may need to be updated to meet current business needs of Alaska fishermen.

UFA has long supported the State's Division of Economic Development Commercial Fishing Revolving Loan program, and we support HB 261 with the intention of helping fishermen obtain the financing needed for successful operation of a fishing business. We recommend advancement of HB 261 through the House Finance Committee, and ask for your support.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Vinsel  
Executive Director

Cc:

Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Charisse Millett  
Representative Steve Thompson