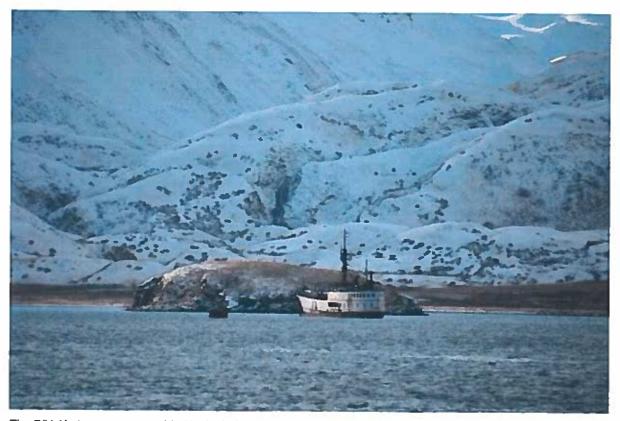# Unalaska pays thousands to sink already sunk boat

By **Zoë Sobel, Alaska's Energy Desk - Unalaska** - February 14, 2018

The F/V Akutan was moored in Unalaska's Captains Bay for six months. (Photo by Zoë Sobel/KUCB)

The City of Unalaska will pay $36,000 to help sink a boat that's already on the ocean floor.

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The state scuttled the F/V Akutan last month with help from the U.S. Coast Guard, but they moved forward before collecting funds from the city. That's left councilors debating whether they should chip in at all. The final vote was almost unanimous.

Councilor James Fitch was all for it.

"We are obligated to pay this because the job has already been done," Fitch said.

The F/V Akutan was abandoned in Captains Bay in September – following a disastrous fishing season in Bristol Bay, in which the ship's owner went broke, the crew went unpaid and its 80-ton haul of salmon was declared unfit for human or animal consumption. The Coast Guard assisted the state in performing an emergency scuttle of the processor in late January.

Councilor Roger Rowland was the sole objector — a position he has held for weeks. He says funding this will set an expensive precedent if other mariners decide to abandon boats near Unalaska.

Plus, he says state officials hired Resolve Magone Marine to help with the scuttling before securing municipal funds.

"This contract was let without any guarantee from the city," Rowland said. "We are not obligated to pay this money."

It's unclear how much the disposal cost. The Alaska Department of Natural Resources has not responded to multiple requests for comment.

Councilors are also taking steps to avoid future problems with abandoned vessels. They unanimously passed a resolution Tuesday night supporting Senate Bill 92, which would create a statewide derelict vessel prevention program and fund.

Vice Mayor Dennis Robinson also expressed interest in reviewing the city's status as a "potential port of refuge" — the designation that brought the Akutan to Unalaska.