



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

February 5, 2025

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



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February 7, 2025

Chair Rep. Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Special Committee
State Capitol Room 120
Juneau AK, 99801
House.Fisheries@akleg.gov

RE: Support HB 31 - Registration of Boats Exemption

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) is an industry-based nonprofit strengthening commercial fishing in the Prince William Sound region by advocating for the needs of community-based fishermen. Since 1935, CDFU has represented fishermen and their families for thriving fisheries that sustain regional ecosystems, communities, and ways of life - ensuring they are well informed, resourced, and mobilized to affect positive change for all harvesters in the region.

We are writing to offer our support for the amendments concerning exemptions for the registration of boats to include commercial vessels with valid certificates of documentation issued by the US Coast Guard (USCG). We are also in favor of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) assessing an annual \$8 registration fee for commercial vessels that have a certificate of documentation issued by the USCG, and sharing relevant list information as appropriate to help prove valid registrations.

Compliance and enforcement of the Derelict Vessel law of 2021 has been challenging, both for commercial fishermen whose vessels are indeed properly registered, and for troopers issuing citations without visible access to that registration. Commercial



fishing vessels are not required by the US Coast Guard to display their USCG numbers on the outside of their vessel, only to hold documentation inside the hull. Alaska Department of Fish and Game requires vessels to display their ADFG numbers on the outside of their boat for easy identification and reference. The interim solution for compliance has been for vessels to register with the DMV for a sticker, but this has proven duplicative and with its own set of challenges in equity and access for many vessel owners statewide who have less access to a DMV because of location or lack of year-round hours. We heard reports from fishermen whose local DMV didn't have the stickers in inventory. By many accounts it has been messy and complicated for operators to comply.

The CFEC assessing an annual fee for permit holders is an elegant way to manage the problems with registered boat exemptions in relation to the Derelict Vessel law. We don't want to see any more confusion or arguments between operators and enforcement officers about whether a boat is indeed registered.

Sincerely,

Ezekiel Brown
Board President



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

1008 Fish Creek Rd

Juneau, AK 99801

Email: kathy@seafa.org

Cell Phone: 907-465-7666

Fax: 907-917-5470

Website: <http://www.seafa.org>

February 18, 2025

House Finance
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: SUPPPORT HB 31 – DERELICT VESSEL – EXEMPTION BOAT REGISTRATION

Dear Representative Neal Foster & Representative Andy Josephson and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) supports HB 31 that once again tries to exempt commercial fishing vessels from registering with DMV if they are USCG documented and have a CFEC vessel license. The same amount of funding for derelict vessels are collected under this fix but takes away the confusion registering your vessel in two locations.

SEAFA is a multi-gear/multi-species commercial fishing non-profit association with 300+ members involved principally in the salmon, crab, shrimp and longline fisheries of Southeast Alaska.

Please pass this legislation and take care of the fix for documented vessels.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hansen
Executive Director