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Senators Introduce Legislation Banning “Frankenfish”
Effort to stop genetically-engineered salmon protects Alaska fish

U.S. Senators Mark Begich (D-Alaska) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) today formally introduced legislation to ban genetically-engineered (GE) salmon. The legislation, and a companion bill that would require labeling of GE fish, are in response to a proposal by AquaBounty Technologies currently under consideration by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

“Frankenfish threatens our wild stocks, their habitat, our food safety, and would bring economic harm to Alaska’s wild salmon fishermen,” Begich said. “Genetically-modified salmon, the first such hybrid to be considered for human consumption, is risky, unprecedented and unnecessary.”

“I am strongly opposed to the FDA approval of genetically engineered salmon. It is completely irresponsible for the FDA to even consider this action without evaluating the impacts on Alaska’s wild salmon fisheries,” **Murkowski** said. “The FDA has not studied the environmental effects, let alone the economic impacts on the salmon and seafood markets that would result from approval.”

Today’s bill introduction is actually a reintroduction of legislation Sen. Begich sponsored and Sen. Murkowski co-sponsored in the last Congressional session. The FDA has not indicated when it will make a decision on the AquaBounty proposal, and the senators are hoping to move the legislation quickly.

In September, Begich and Murkowski were among a group of ten senators who sent a letter to the FDA questioning the review process and the safety of a genetically-engineered animal for human consumption. The FDA is considering AquaBounty’s proposal to produce a hybrid

Atlantic salmon modified with a Chinook salmon growth gene and an antifreeze gene from an eel-like fish, the ocean pout.

In addition to Begich and Murkowski, the bill to ban GE fish is co-sponsored by Sen. Patty Murray (D-Washington) and the bill requiring labeling, should GE fish get approved, is co-sponsored by Sen. Murray and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Oregon).

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