

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 23, 2005

3:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Thomas Wagoner, Chair
Senator Fred Dyson
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Kim Elton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Ralph Seekins, Vice Chair
Senator Ben Stevens
Senator Gretchen Guess

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 25

"An Act relating to labeling and identification of genetically modified fish and fish products."

MOVED SB 25 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6(FSH)

Relating to the labeling of fish and shellfish to identify the country of origin and to distinguish between wild and farmed fish and shellfish.

MOVED CSHJR 6(FSH) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 25

SHORT TITLE: GENETICALLY MODIFIED FISH

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) ELTON, STEVENS G

01/11/05	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 12/30/04
01/11/05	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/11/05	(S)	L&C, RES
02/01/05	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 211
02/01/05	(S)	-- Meeting Rescheduled to 02/08/05 --
02/08/05	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 211
02/08/05	(S)	Moved SB 25 Out of Committee
02/08/05	(S)	MINUTE(L&C)
02/09/05	(S)	L&C RPT 4DP 1NR

02/09/05 (S) NR: BUNDE
02/09/05 (S) DP: ELLIS, DAVIS, SEEKINS, STEVENS B
02/23/05 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: HJR 6

SHORT TITLE: LABELING OF FISH /SHELLFISH PRODUCTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KERTTULA

01/19/05 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/05 (H) FSH, RES
01/26/05 (H) FSH AT 8:30 AM CAPITOL 124
01/26/05 (H) -- Meeting Canceled --
01/26/05 (H) RES AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 124
01/26/05 (H) Scheduled But Not Heard
01/31/05 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124
01/31/05 (H) -- Meeting Canceled --
02/02/05 (H) FSH RPT CS(FSH) NT 6DP
02/02/05 (H) DP: HARRIS, ELKINS, SALMON, WILSON,
THOMAS, LEDOUX
02/02/05 (H) FSH AT 8:30 AM CAPITOL 124
02/02/05 (H) Moved CSHJR 6(FSH) Out of Committee
02/02/05 (H) MINUTE(FSH)
02/09/05 (H) RES AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124
02/09/05 (H) Moved CSHJR 6(FSH) Out of Committee
02/09/05 (H) MINUTE(RES)
02/11/05 (H) RES RPT CS(FSH) NT 7DP
02/11/05 (H) DP: OLSON, GATTO, SEATON, LEDOUX,
ELKINS, SAMUELS, RAMRAS
02/14/05 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/14/05 (H) VERSION: CSHJR 6(FSH)
02/16/05 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/16/05 (S) RES
02/23/05 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

Dennis Kelso
University of California Santa Cruz
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 26.

Representative Kerttula
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor or HJR 6.

Tabatha Williams, Intern
Representative Kerttula

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Commented on HJR 6 for sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR THOMAS WAGONER called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:32:25 PM](#). Senators Elton, Stedman, Dyson and Chair Wagoner were present.

SB 25-GENETICALLY MODIFIED FISH

CHAIR WAGONER announced SB 25 to be up for consideration.

SENATOR ELTON said Senator Gary Stevens is co-sponsor of SB 25. It requires that genetically modified finfish or shellfish sold in Alaska be identified on the label if it is sold at the retail level. Right now only an aquarium fish has been approved for sale at the retail level, but the FDA has an application pending from a US/Canadian firm that wants to produce GM Atlantic salmon for human consumption and to sell the eggs from them to other fish farmers around the world. He said that other jurisdictions around the world will be making decisions on whether or not to allow GM fish and it won't be economic to deny it. Alaskans will be able to make informed purchase decisions at the retail level and the required labeling will allow marketers of Alaskan seafood products to draw an even brighter line between wild and natural Alaska fish and industrially produced fish for human consumption.

[3:36:30 PM](#)

DENNIS KELSO, University of California Santa Cruz, supported SB 25 and said his research focuses on the effects of global production of GM fish on Alaska's wild salmon. Genetically modified fish will be the most active area for development of the GM technology. He thought that this is a consumer choice bill that equips Alaskan consumers with the knowledge of what kind of seafood and production practice they can chose to support.

[3:38:54 PM](#)

SENATOR STEDMAN said SB 25 has the unanimous support of the Salmon Industry Task Force.

[3:39:57 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON moved to pass SB 25 from committee with attached fiscal note and individual recommendations. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

[3:40:15 PM](#) Recess [3:41:25 PM](#)

CSHJR 6(FSH)-LABELING OF FISH /SHELLFISH PRODUCTS

CHAIR WAGONER announced CSHJR 6(FSH) to be up for consideration.

REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA, sponsor, said there are currently labeling requirements for country of origin and wild and farmed salmon. Unfortunately, the USDA is thinking of removing processed fish from those requirements. That includes canned, smoked and pouched products. She thinks this is wrong and that people should still be able to benefit from labeling.

[3:42:55 PM](#)

TABATHA WILIAMS, intern working for Representative Kerttula, said she is from a fishing family and said that the fishing industry provides many jobs for Alaskans and that even the tourist industry depends on the Alaska seafood industry's reputation to attract its clientele. Farmed fish has been linked to cancer-causing toxins and high mercury levels. We don't want our wild and healthy salmon to be associated with the notoriously bad press farmed fish has earned over the recent years.

[3:44:38 PM](#)

SENATOR ELTON moved to pass CSHJR 6(FSH), version F, from committee with attached fiscal notes and individual recommendations. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

There was nothing else to come before the committee and Chair Wagoner adjourned the meeting at [3:45:05 PM](#).