

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 1, 2010

3:33 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bill Wielechowski, Co-Chair  
Senator Charlie Huggins, Vice Chair  
Senator Hollis French  
Senator Gary Stevens

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Lesil McGuire, Co-Chair  
Senator Bert Stedman  
Senator Thomas Wagoner

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 27**

Urging the federal government to provide funding for domestic seafood marketing and promotional activities.

- HEARD AND HELD

**SENATE BILL NO. 274**

"An Act naming the state fish hatchery on the Elmendorf Air Force Base the William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish Hatchery."

- HEARD AND HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 27

SHORT TITLE: FED. FUNDING: DOMESTIC SEAFOOD MARKETING

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) EGAN

02/12/10	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/12/10	(S)	RES
03/01/10	(S)	RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 274

SHORT TITLE: WILLIAM JACK HERNANDEZ FISH HATCHERY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DYSON

02/10/10	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
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02/10/10 (S) RES  
03/01/10 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR DENNIS EGAN  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SJR 27.

JULIE DECKER, Project Leader  
National Seafood Marketing Coalition  
United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA)

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SJR 27.

BRUCE WALLACE, Member  
National Seafood Marketing Coalition  
United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA)

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SJR 27.

SENATOR FRED DYSON  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 274.

IRVIN BROCK, representing himself  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 274.

TOM NAMTVEDT, representing himself  
Wasilla, AK  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 274.

GARY WALL, representing himself  
Anchorage, AK  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 274.

MICHAEL FALLON, representing himself  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 274.

FRED WILLIAMS, representing himself  
Copper Center, AK  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 274.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:33:58 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI** called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Stevens, French and Wielechowski. Senator Huggins arrived a minute later.

**SJR 27-FED. FUNDING: DOMESTIC SEAFOOD MARKETING**

[3:34:26 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BILL WIELECHOWSKI announced SJR 27 to be up for consideration.

[3:34:54 PM](#)

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS joined the committee.

[3:35:03 PM](#)

SENATOR DENNIS EGAN, sponsor of SJR 27, testified that this resolution urges Congress to use a portion of federal revenues to market American seafood. Seafood producers struggle with the same challenges as other producers, yet are not given the same support. Specifically, seafood producers do not receive any funds for domestic marketing and product development. They face competition from foreign products that require vigorous and innovative promotions.

He said that currently, over 80 percent of the fish consumed annually by American families is the product of foreign countries. The seafood industry is vital to Alaska's economy and culture.

[3:36:23 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved conceptual Amendment 1 to delete "50" and insert "80" on page 1, line 5. There were no objections and it was so ordered.

CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI opened public testimony.

[3:36:52 PM](#)

JULIE DECKER, Project Leader, National Seafood Marketing Coalition, said this is the United Fishermen of Alaska's (UFA) new initiative to fund a national program to market domestic seafood in the United States. She introduced Bruce Wallace, another team member.

She explained that the UFA formed this coalition partly because Alaska is uniquely positioned to lead this project since it is the national leader in the production, management, and marketing of seafood. The idea is to invest a portion of import duties

that are already collected on fish and fish products in a domestic seafood marketing program. They propose creating nine regional boards throughout the country that would receive the money and determine how to direct it into marketing activities like product development, advertising, infrastructure, and research and development. The idea is to increase the value of the products and increase competitiveness against foreign competition, and growing the economy with resource that is already harvested and producing more jobs in that area.

MS. DECKER said the State of Alaska has seen return on its investment in seafood marketing and they want to see that continued on a nation-wide basis. The Coalition had already seen interest in their one trip "Back East" and have received one letter of support so far. They will continue the coalition building throughout the year.

She said the reason the Legislature's support is important is because it is an example to other communities and organizations across the nation as to what they can do to help with the initiative.

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SENATOR FRENCH commented that he didn't know the duties and tariffs generate approximately \$280 million annually for the U.S. Treasury in reference to the first "Whereas" clause on page 2. He asked if the second "Whereas" clause that says "revenue from anti-dumping and countervailing duties on imported fish...total hundreds of millions of dollars annually;" was a separate category and asked her how the duties work.

MS. DECKER answered these are two distinct pots of money. The anti-dumping and countervailing duties are what the U.S. levies to try to level the playing field for other countries who may subsidize their industries. For instance farmed fish - it keeps them from selling their product in the U.S at below-market costs.

[3:41:36 PM](#)

BRUCE WALLACE, member, National Seafood Marketing Coalition, United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA), noted that the State of Alaska has worked well with industry on numerous levels for a number of years. They find that is not necessarily true around the U.S. So, if this is successful it will build a number of bridges between maritime states.

[3:43:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI closed public testimony and SJR 27 would be held.

**SB 274-WILLIAM JACK HERNANDEZ FISH HATCHERY**

[3:43:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BILL WIELECHOWSKI announced SB 274 to be up for consideration.

[3:43:36 PM](#)

SENATOR FRED DYSON, sponsor of SB 274, thanked the chair for hearing this bill. He explained that a very effective fish hatchery on Elmendorf Air Force Base is being reconstructed. Folks who are very familiar with the existing hatchery and its history have asked that new hatchery be named after William Jack Hernandez. He was an extraordinary person who served as a civilian contractor on Wake Island building fortifications for the Marine Corps when the Japanese attacked. They had a 16-day fight in which he participated and then was taken prisoner for three-plus years; he escaped once and was recaptured. He came back and enlisted in the U.S. Army and transferred to Fort Richardson in 1956 as an NCO (non-commissioned officer) and was assigned to be the fish and wildlife conservation NCO; his job was to rehabilitate the lakes and streams on the Post.

In 1957 the Secretary of Army approved a cooperative agreement with the Territorial Fish and Game Department. Waste heat was used from the power plant and the operation was very successful for a long time. He said that Mr. Hernandez retired from the Army and was given a commendation. He then went to work for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) and returned to Fort Richardson to manage the hatchery.

SENATOR DYSON said the History Channel ran a special called "Wake Island: the Alamo of the Pacific" and a book has been written that largely centered on his life and Wake Island. The effort to get his name attached to the hatchery has largely come from people who had worked with him and after him and seen what he accomplished.

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SENATOR DYSON said the existing hatchery is being disassembled and people might be confused by thinking that is the one being named for him, but an amendment clarifies in the title that the new one is being named after Mr. Hernandez.

CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI offered Amendment 1 labeled 26-LS1449\A.2.

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

BY SENATOR DYSON

Page 1, line 1, following the first occurrence of  
"the":

Insert "new"

Page 1, line 5, following "Sec. 35.40.225.":

Insert "William Jack Hernandez Sport Fish  
Hatchery."

Page 1, line 5:

Delete "located"

Insert "under construction"

Page 1, line 6, following "Anchorage":

Insert "scheduled to be completed in May 2011"

There were no objections and Amendment 1 was adopted. He opened public testimony.

[3:48:22 PM](#)

IRVIN BROCK, representing himself, said he worked with Mr. Hernandez for several years at the beginning of his career with the department. He said, "I can see no one more deserving of having that facility named after him. He was the first fish culturist hired by the State of Alaska to manage the Fort Richardson Hatchery." He was a friend and mentor to many future state hatchery employees. He was also the "consummate gentleman" and called everyone "Sir" no matter what their age or experience. "It would be a great thing to put his name on part of what he started."

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TOM NAMTVEDT, representing himself, Wasilla, said he is a retired fisheries biologist and is a commercial fisherman. He thanked Senator Dyson for sponsoring this bill. He added that Mr. Hernandez, an E6, referred to him, an E4, as "kind Sir." Mr. Namtvedt said, "Bill took every death of a fish personally." When Mr. Hernandez retired in 1968 he took over his duties and quickly learned that he left huge accomplishments. He said that Mr. Hernandez died of cancer in 2003 and he lived at Lake Susitna and fished commercially in Bristol Bay.

[3:53:51 PM](#)

GARY WALL, representing himself, Anchorage, said he lived in the Sand Lake area and supported naming the new fish hatchery after Mr. Hernandez. Mr. Wall said he arrived in 1973 and was assigned to the fish hatchery and Bill took him under his wing and helped him out in every way. He worked with Bill through his entire career. He was a great guy and a real gentleman who knew his fish and was dedicated to the hatchery programs.

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MICHAEL FALLON, representing himself, said he is a retired ADF&G fish culturist and assistance manager at Fort Richardson. He stated, "It was quite an honor to work with Bill at the beginning of my career as Irv did. I can't think of anybody who has come through the fish culture program that has made a difference like Bill has for all of us." He was well respected by everybody in the fish culture program as well as the biologists.

MR. FALLON said another person, Jesse Wilson, was also suitable for a recommendation. He operated the power plant and worked closely with Bill.

[3:57:02 PM](#)

FRED WILLIAMS, representing himself, Copper Center, said he is a retired fisheries biologist, and supported naming the new hatchery after Mr. Hernandez saying he was the most dedicated fisheries biologist he had ever met. He read every publication he could get his hands on.

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CO-CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI closed public testimony and held SB 274. There being no further business to come before the committee, he adjourned the meeting at 3:58 p.m.