

**SB**

**254**

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FILE

SB 254

was referred to the  
Senate Finance  
Committee

No hearing was held  
on this bill

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January 22, 2002

The Honorable Rick Halford  
President of the Senate  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Halford:

I am transmitting to you a supplemental appropriation bill that I urge the Legislature to put on a "fast track" for action because the items contained in the bill are vital to Alaska's primary industries - fishing, tourism and oil. All of these industries are integral to the economic health of our entire state, and all of them face challenges in the coming year for various reasons -- the public's reaction to terrorism, national stock market conditions, national energy policy, and increased competition in the global marketplace.

The bill includes \$10 million appropriations to boost marketing efforts in the salmon and tourism industries. The salmon marketing efforts include \$5 million for regional salmon marketing grants and international niche marketing program to promote salmon in developing markets. The other \$5 million is earmarked for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute for domestic and international marketing and quality assurance.

Tourism assistance includes a \$9.8 million grant to the Alaska Travel Industry Association to mitigate the drastic decline in recreational travel after September 11<sup>th</sup>. The Alaska Marine Highway System would receive \$200,000 to specifically promote travel to Alaska by ferry and communities on the system.

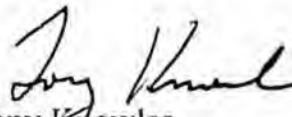
The remaining \$1 million proposed in the bill is for a grant to Arctic Power to continue its national efforts in gaining support for oil and gas exploration and development in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

The Honorable Rick Halford

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The fishing, tourism, and oil and gas industries provide the highest number of jobs in Alaska and drive our economy statewide. Slumps in these industries ripple down to the local level in diminished revenue from fish, sales, and bed taxes. It is the responsibility of state government to use the tools we have to ensure Alaska's economy is vibrant and able to sustain quality of life. I urge you to consider and pass these appropriations as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Tony Knowles  
Governor