

**HJR**

**10**



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

REPRESENTATIVE DREW SCALZI  
State Capitol, Juneau  
Alaska 99801-1182

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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Email: Representative\_Drew\_Scalzi@legis.state.ak.us

## HJR:10 Sponsor Statement

*Relating to the management of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska ground-fisheries and the protection and restoration of the Steller sea lion.*

The sharp decline of the Western Area Steller sea lion population from 120,000 to 25,000 animals in the past 30 years prompted a U.S. District Court Judge to impose a groundfish trawl ban on Alaska's coastal waters effective August 2000. The judge stated that the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) violated the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by failing to write an adequate biological opinion for protection of the declining sea lion population. The ban dry-docked fishing fleets from waters within 20 nautical miles of sea lion breeding and resting areas, encompassing approximately 100,000 square miles of prime fishing waters in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska from Prince William Sound to the Aleutian Islands.

Thanks to the direct efforts of Senator Ted Stevens, the August measures were suspended through 2001 and forty-four million federal dollars were allocated to review the biological opinion released by NMFS in November, 2000. Many industry and government experts feel the opinion lacks adequate scientific basis for such restrictions. The North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the National Academy of Sciences will conduct an independent scientific review of the NMFS biological opinion. Additionally the governor has formed a Steller Sea Lion Restoration Team to assess factors affecting the decline of the species and the need for fishery restrictions.

According to Senator Stevens, the impacts of a ban on this fishery are far-reaching:

- \$1 billion pollock and cod fishery at risk (1,000 boats)
- \$500-800 million dollar impact on fishing industry
- one-half billion dollar impact on the entire state's economy
- commercial fishing loan industry will lose billions of dollars
- lost tax base will make ghost towns in Western Alaska
- Native Alaskan development programs lose \$50 million/year; thousands of Native jobs lost
- social impacts on communities include unemployment and related domestic problems; loss of community infrastructure employment, i.e., teachers, police officers, government officials
- national trade deficit raised by \$250 million

Supporting Senator Stevens' measure to temporarily postpone fishery restrictions until the NMFS biological opinion can be scientifically-reviewed means biology-based management decisions can be implemented for both the protection of the Steller sea lion and Alaska's important trawl fishery.

TED STEVENS, ALASKA, CHAIRMAN

*Stellar  
Sea Lion*

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6025

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Asst. C. ....

February 26, 2001

The Honorable Drew Scalzi  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Drew:


Thank you for the copy of your letter to David Benton concerning Steller sea lion research and the use of the Kodiak Near Island Research Facility.

This sounds like a reasonable idea. It is my hope that the increased funding and directives for Steller Sea Lion related research included in the year end CJS Appropriations legislation will assist NMFS in making more informed decisions based on meaningful data.

As always, thanks for keeping me informed.

With best wishes,

Cordially,

  
TED STEVENS



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

February 14, 2001

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Juneau, Alaska 99801-1143  
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(907) 463-2545 Fax  
E-Mail: [ufa@ufa-fish.org](mailto:ufa@ufa-fish.org)  
[www.ufa-fish.org](http://www.ufa-fish.org)

Representative Drew Scalzi  
Interdepartmental Mail Stop 3100  
State Capitol,  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Scalzi,

United Fishermen of Alaska supports HJR10. The management of groundfish fisheries in relation to the Stellar Sea Lion is one of the most important economic issues for the commercial fisheries and communities from the Bering Sea to Prince William Sound.

United Fishermen of Alaska would like to thank you as the sponsor for bringing forward this very important resolution, for the benefit of affected communities and the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Tom Gemmell  
Executive Director

#### MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Trollers Association • Alsea Processors Association • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Copper River Salmon Producers Association • Cordova District Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • Kodiak Seiners Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Northwest Setnetters Association • Old Harbor Fishermen's Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association • Seafood Producers Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners Association • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Salmon Association • United Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Association

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**



February 8, 2001

Members  
Alaska State House of Representatives  
House Resources Committee  
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Committee Members:

With this letter the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation is going on record in support of passage of House Joint Resolution No. 10 relating to the management of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries and the protection and restoration of the Steller Sea Lion.

While the ongoing shift in population numbers of Steller Sea Lions merits concern, attention and, ultimately, action, it is very important to base regulatory decision making on sound science.

The current Federal approach is clearly being driven legal and political pressure, rather than a well-documented scientific assessment of the ecosystem. In the long run, management actions taken for other than scientific purposes will result in a complete loss of credibility for the regulatory process. If that regulatory process is perceived to be corrupt, the public will not support it and the "Failure of the Commons" is inevitable.

AFDF was chartered over twenty years ago to lead development of Alaska's underutilized seafood resources. Much of our early work was focused on bringing the groundfish industry into being. It would be tragic if all that has been built around Alaska's groundfish abundance was to fail for such a faulty premise.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Jones", is written over a horizontal line.

Marc S. Jones  
Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation



# Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.

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 e-mail resources@akrdc.org http://www.akrdc.org

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February 8, 2001

Representative Drew Scalzi  
 State Capitol, Room 13  
 Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HJR 10, Groundfish Fisheries and Steller Sea Lion

Dear Representative Scalzi:

~~The Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc., (RDC) is writing to express its strong support for HJR 10.~~

RDC is a statewide organization made up of all resource sectors, business associations, labor unions, Native corporations, tourism providers, local governments and thousands of individuals. RDC's purpose is to expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

RDC supports the economies of local Alaskan communities which are dependent on the groundfish fishery. To this end, RDC endorses HJR 10, which supports the independent scientific review of the November 30, 2000 biological opinion for the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries. RDC also applauds Senator Stevens' legislation which delays implementation of the alternatives contained in the biological opinion until the independent scientific review is complete.

Thank you for introducing HJR 10. You have RDC's full support.

Sincerely,

Tadd Owens  
 Executive Director

This Edition Sponsored by: Pacific Seafood Processors Association

# Resource Review

September 2000

A periodic publication of the Resource Development Council, Inc.



*"Fishermen, fish processing plants and communities from Cordova to Dutch Harbor have survived and thrived despite earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, freezing spray and fluctuations in fish and shellfish abundance. The question now is can the communities from Cordova to Dutch Harbor survive the Endangered Species Act or will once thriving communities become ghost towns?"*

## Sea lion restrictions cripple fishing industry, coastal communities

By Chris Blackburn  
Alaska Fish Data Bank

When the third quarterly pollock fishery in the Gulf of Alaska opened August 20, more than half the fleet stayed tied to the dock. Out of the 41 vessels that make up the Kodiak pollock fleet, 15 vessels stayed at the dock. Of the 52 vessels in the Sandpoint area

fleet, 35 stayed at the dock. The tie-up was not due to price, but to safety considerations.

The vessels that remained at the dock had been displaced from their fishing areas near shore by Ninth Circuit Judge Thomas E. Zilly who, on July 19, issued an interim injunction effective August 8 which prohibited trawling within 20 nautical miles (NM) of the shore

### Impacts of trawling ban in critical habitat areas

- The ban on bottom fishing could reduce the tax base for local communities by as much as 60 to 70 percent.
- The fishing industry stands to lose well in excess of \$100 million annually from prohibitions on trawling in Steller sea lion critical habitat areas.
- Fishermen will face substantially higher risk factors as the ban forces their smaller boats further off shore into dangerous seas.
- The economic base of coastal communities depend heavily on fish. Revenues from fishing funds schools, hospitals, roads, and local merchants.
- The area closed to trawling is currently at least 50,000 square miles of near-shore ocean from St. Elias to Attu, a distance of 2,000 miles. The distance from the Canadian border to Key West, Florida is 1,800 miles.



Many local residents in Kodiak have hard feelings toward environmental groups pressing for an end to trawling in Steller sea lion critical habitat areas.

under the authority of the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The Gulf of Alaska trawl fleet is mainly composed of vessels less than 60 to 100 feet in length – vessels designed to fish near shore. To venture 20 NM out is exceedingly dangerous.

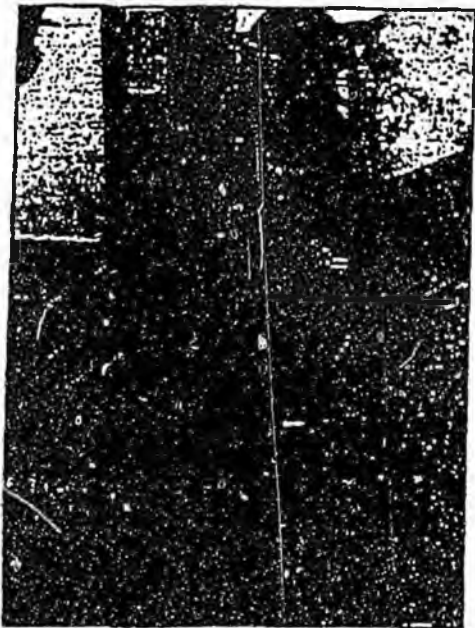
The vessels that did try to fish the third pollock season found little pollock outside the 20 NM barrier and actually spent more money looking for pollock than the value of the small amounts of pollock they were able to find.

It is the 30-year decline of Steller sea lions in the Central and Western Gulf and Bering Sea/Aleutians that has brought the ugly realities of the ESA to the Alaska fishing industry. Between 1976 and 2000, the Western Area Steller sea lion population has declined from 120,000 animals to 25,000 animals.

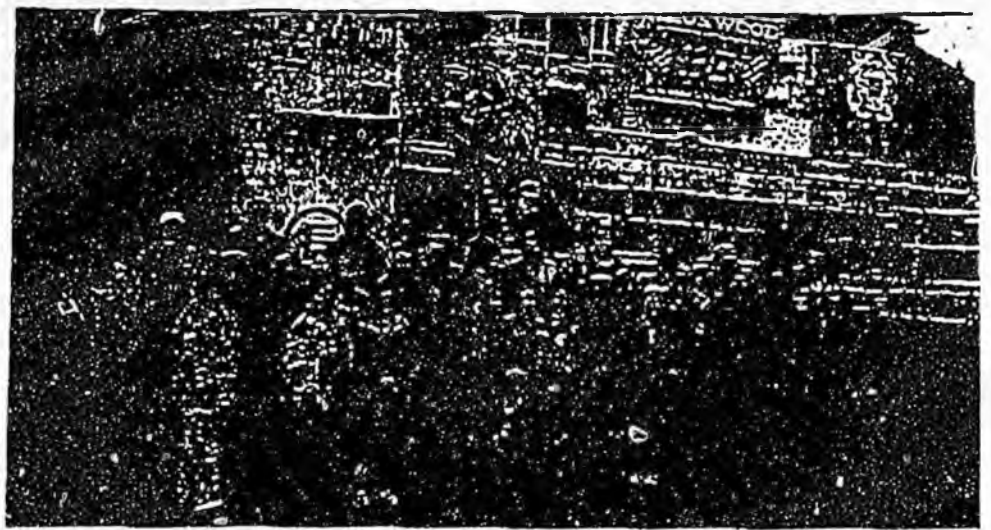
According to National Marine Fish-  
(Continued to page 4)

# RDC Board visits Kodiak

*Community Outreach  
September 2000*



*Anchorage Mayor George Wuerch watches Kodiak Harbormaster Marty Owen navigate his vessel "The Sea Breeze" along Kodiak's waterfront.*



*RDC board members pose before the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Ironwood. The RDC board toured the U.S. Coast Guard base at Kodiak. The base is the largest Coast Guard facility in the U.S.*



*RDC board members were treated to a waterfront tour of Kodiak's port by Harbormaster Marty Owen.*



*John Lucas describes the wine-making process at his Kodiak winery.*

## Steller Sea lion protection measures draw fire in Kodiak

*Continued from page 4)*



*RDC Board member Al Burch of the Alaska Dragger's Association leads an RDC delegation to the fleet's docks in Kodiak.*

biological opinion as required by the ESA, Judge Zilly granted the plaintiffs' interim injunction which banned trawling within the critical sea lion habitat defined as the 20 NM from the shore. The interim injunction remains in effect until NMFS produces a satisfactory biological opinion. The opinion is due October 31. And No one knows how long the Judge will take to make his decision.

Meanwhile, many boats in the Gulf of Alaska will remain at the dock when the D season pollock fishery opens October 1 rather than risk fishing more than 20 NM from shore. When the boats can't fish or cannot find fish, there will be no work for processing workers, many of which are year-round residents of their communities.

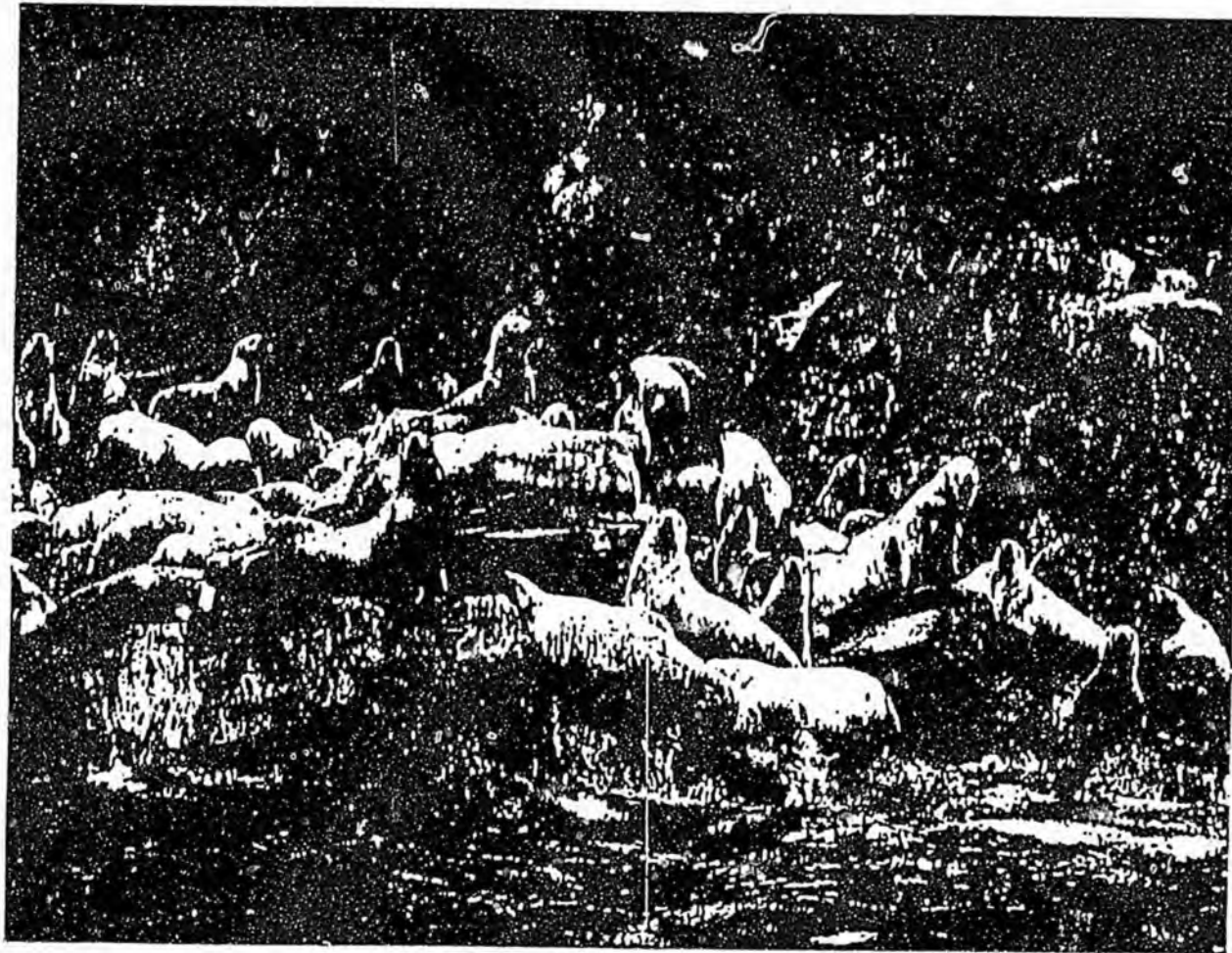
The economic base for Alaska coastal communities is fish. When the pollock season opened August 20,

there was 23,000 MT of pollock quota available. Because most of the pollock biomass was within the 20 NM critical habitat, the boats that did fish were only able to catch 9,620 MT before the season closed. The 13,413 MT left in the water was worth \$2,217,169 ex-vessel. Also lost was the severance tax and raw fish tax which is a significant part of a coastal community's income base.

Fishermen, fish processing plants and communities from Cordova to Dutch Harbor have survived and thrived despite earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, freezing spray and fluctuations in fish and shellfish abundance. The question now is can the communities from Cordova to Dutch Harbor survive the Endangered Species Act or will once thriving communities become ghost towns?

# FY01 Steller sea lion-Groundfish Budget

**\$43.15 million**



**Federal Funding  
Allocation**

# Studies Identified in Steven's Rider

- Available prey
- Predator/prey
- Predation by other marine mammals
- Fishery-SSL interactions
- Regime shift
- Disease
- Survival rates

- Population counts
- Nutritional stress
- Foreign harvests
- Residual impacts of former eradication programs
- Intentional lethal takes
- Non-lethal measures to protect SSL from predators

# “Endowed Organizations”

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Funding Level in FY01</i>
NMFS	\$7.85 million
Alaska SeaLife Center	\$6.0 million
ADFG	\$2.5 million
Univ. of Alaska	\$1.0 million
NPUMMRC	\$0.8 million
OAR/PMEL	\$6.0 million
NOS	\$2.0 million
NPFMC	\$2.0 million
Commerce	\$15.0 million
Total	\$43.15 million

# National Marine Fisheries Service

## FY01 Budget-\$7.85 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Localized depletion (cod, pollock, Atka mackerel)	1600
Satellite tagging SSL	400
Food habits/foraging behavior	350
Forage fish assessment	550
Regime shift- AI passes (with PMEL)	400
Implement Recovery Plan	2300
Predation studies	750
AKR Management Activities	1500

# Alaska SeaLife Center FY01 Budget-\$6 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Feeding behavior	1000
Remote monitoring/branding	1500
Collection of pups-short term hold	1500
Endocrine and immune function	300
Chiswell Island prey study	500
Chiswell Island predation study	200
Disease and reproductive biology	500
Instrumentation (e.g., implants)	500

Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game  
FY01 Budget- \$2.5 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
SSL body condition and life history	2000
Estimation of vital rates	300
Model response to incidental take	150
Survey of blood borne diseases	25
Measurement of contaminants	25

# University of Alaska

## FY01 Budget- \$1 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Seasonal diets of SSL at Kodiak	200
Prey availability at Kodiak	300
Prey quality at Kodiak	100
Diet of SSL competitors	200
Killer whale/shark diets at Kodiak	200

# North Pacific Universities Marine Mammal Research Consortium FY01 Budget- \$0.8 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Bioenergetics of SSL	250
Bias in scat analysis	35
Telemetry (implants)	40
Amack food quality/SE scat collection	24
Bioenergetic modeling/timing of molt	31
KW predation model/subs. Harvest	120
Diet in Oregon/WA/forage fish abund.	22
SSL vital rates and condition indices ?	120

North Pacific Fisheries  
Management Council  
FY01 Budget- \$2 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
NAS Independent review	700
Management and legal compliance	1300

# Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

## FY01 Budget- \$6 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Analysis of existing environmental data	500
2-yr field study and modeling-combination of PMEL and RFP (CIFAR)	5000
Coordination, communication, outreach	500

# National Ocean Survey

## FY01 Budget- \$2 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Competitive process for directed research on predator/prey relationships (CIFAR)	2000

Dept. of Commerce  
FY01 Budget- \$15 million

Study ( <i>Preliminary</i> )	Cost (000s)
Competitive process for directed research on predator/prey relationships	15,000

% of Funds in FY01 Budget to inhouse  
research, contracts, management and reviews  
\$43.15 million

- 36% in-house research
- 56% contractual studies (research determined by competitive process)
- 6% management related to ESA/NEPA
- 2% external reviews
- Possible Problem- FY02 budget currently has \$7-10 million assigned to SSL-groundfish research and management
- Possible Problem- Contractual studies may not provide information in time for October 2001 review

## Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

9369 North Douglas Highway  
Juneau, AK 99801



Phone 907-586-6652

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E-mail: [seafa@gci.net](mailto:seafa@gci.net)

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March 16, 2001

Senate Resources  
Senator John Torgerson, Chair  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol Room 427  
Juneau, AK 99801

Fax 465-4779

RE: HJR 10

The Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance is in support of HJR 10 relating to the management of the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands and Gulf of Alaska groundfish fisheries and protection and restoration of Stellar sea lions.

While the decline of Stellar sea lions is very disturbing, it is equally disturbing that a whole industry and the communities dependent upon the industry are being asked to make sacrifices that are not based on sound science.

Please pass this resolution supporting the efforts of the United States Congress and Senator Ted Stevens last year and in requesting that a scientifically sound management program be developed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kathy Hansen" followed by a horizontal line.

Kathy Hansen  
Executive Director