

HJR

12

<TARGET><BILL>HJR 12</BILL><SUBJECT>HJR
12</SUBJECT><COMM>HFSH30</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Joint Resolution 12: Legislation to Protect Wild Alaska Salmon and the Commercial Fishing Industry during these Challenging Economic Times

Sponsor Statement

House Joint Resolution 12 is designed to protect our wild Alaska salmon and support our thriving, sustainable fisheries. HJR 12 denounces the recent approval of AquaBounty's AquaAdvantage genetically engineered salmon.

This is the first time the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved a genetically modified animal for human consumption. This FDA approval jeopardizes the sustainable commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries that are so important in Alaska.

The State of Alaska prides itself in producing the highest quality wild seafood. The commercial fishing industry is the largest private sector employer and annual seafood exports are worth over \$3.25 billion. Residents fill their freezers and smoke houses with healthy wild seafood. This industry and way of life would be jeopardized with the inevitable, accidental release of transgenic fish into the wild.

In addition to the impact to the commercial, sport and subsistence fishing, the long-term health effects of consuming genetically engineered salmon are unknown. A majority of state residents oppose the approval of genetically engineered salmon and more than 2,000,000 nationwide submitted comments opposing the approval of AquaBounty's genetically engineered salmon. Additionally, 40 members of congress have voiced opposition.

HJR 12 is designed to raise awareness about the importance of wild seafood and the commercial fishing industry while highlighting the concerns regarding the long term safety of consuming genetically engineered food products.

In the State of Alaska, where sustainable wild caught seafood is such an important part of life, opposing the approval of genetically engineered salmon nationwide is the right thing to do for both consumers and the fishing industry.

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2017 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HJR 12
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HJR12-LEG-SESS-02-23-17
Title: OPPOSING GEN. ENGINEERED SALMON
Sponsor: TARR
Requester: HOUSE SP COMM ON FISHERIES

Department:
Appropriation:
Allocation:
OMB Component Number: 0

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2018	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2018 Request	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2018	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2017) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2018) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

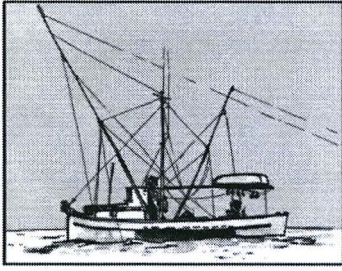
ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency?
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

INITIAL VERSION. ONE PAGE. ZERO NOTE.

Prepared By: <u>JESSICA GEARY, FINANCE MANAGER</u>	Phone: (907)465-6626
Division: <u>LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY</u>	Date: 02/23/2017 01:15 PM
Approved By: <u>PAM VARNI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR</u>	Date: 02/23/2017
Agency: <u>LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY</u>	



Alaska Trollers Association

130 Seward #205
Juneau, AK 99801
(907)586-9400 phone
ata@gci.net

February 26, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
House Fisheries
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol (Mail Stop 3100)
Juneau AK 99801-1182

RE: HJR 12 Labeling of Genetically Engineered Foods

Dear Representative Stutes and Committee Members:

The Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) supports HJR 12, which encourages Congress to enact legislation requiring the clear labeling of genetically engineered (GE) food products. We believe that HJR 12 reflects the wishes and concerns of the vast majority of not only Alaskans, but Americans, who wish to make informed choices about the foods they eat.

ATA represents the interests of commercial hook and line salmon fishermen who operate in state and federal waters; our members are committed to delivering wholesome, high quality seafood to market. Our members believe that consumers deserve clear information and a choice when it comes to the foods they eat.

To date, more than 64 other countries have some form of mandatory labeling requirement for GE foodstuffs.¹ U.S. policymakers have taken a different approach and mostly remain silent on the matter. However, just last year Congress passed legislation that not only denied mandatory labeling of GE products, it also infringed on the rights of the states, including Alaska, to require labeling of products being sold within state borders. That law was dubbed the Denying American's Right to Know Act (DARK Act).

Numerous public opinion surveys have been conducted in the U.S. and reveal that up to 95% of respondents – of any voter persuasion - favor the labeling of GE seafood; about half consistently say they would not choose to eat GE seafood if given a choice. But how can they tell which is which if it's not labeled? In the case of salmon, we suspect some might simply choose to avoid it.

Genetically engineered foods have been around for about 20 years, with apples being a recent addition. By 2012, FDA estimated that 93% of the soybeans and 88% of the corn planted in the US was modified. Very few of those products are labeled. In 1992, FDA established a policy that would allow approved GE foods to be sold without labeling, because those foods are not viewed as “materially” different from non-GE varieties. FDA considers “material” differences as those that can be recognized by the human senses, like taste and smell. So, the use of genetic engineering meets FDA's limited threshold for “materiality” the same, simply because the genetic and molecular changes can't be seen. Since 2009,

¹ [GE Food Labeling Laws](#)

FDA has endorsed this same labeling policy for GE animals. Currently in the GE pipeline for approval is several species of plants and fish, mosquitos, pigs, goats, cattle, and more.

The Alaska Legislature has responded to the call for consumer information through labeling since 2005, with the passage of several bills specific to farmed and GE salmon. A sponsor of the first bi-partisan bill (SB 25²), Representative Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak) noted that labeling, "*...helps highlight Alaska seafood as distinct from genetically modified seafood, doing away with any vagueness that may exist to the consumer when purchasing seafood...*" His co-sponsor Senator Kim Elton (D-Juneau) said he was, "*... encouraged by the bipartisan support this bill received. It is a sign that, when it comes to seafood, Alaskans stand up for informed consumers and friends and neighbors working in the wild fish industry.*"

Fishermen are particularly alarmed by the cavalier approach the nation has taken on the issue of genetically engineered foodstuffs. Once you allow a food to be modified, it becomes different and the level of risk changes, period. FDA's own scientists made that point during the 1990s debate on the agency's policy on GE plants. And while the scientific community is not yet done analyzing the risks of genetically engineered foods, it is well known that there are professional disagreements regarding its safety. At minimum, questions regarding toxicity and allergens do not appear to have been thoroughly vetted and resolved. This is particularly true for GE salmon.

FDA chose to analyze this first ever GE animal as a drug - not a food - which in turn shrouded the approval process in secrecy in order to protect the patents of the developer, AquaBounty. That meant the public was never allowed to engage in a full and transparent review process prior to approval of GE salmon. Despite overwhelming public requests to do so, the FDA ultimately decided that it would not require labeling of GE salmon. However, the agency says that it will allow the commercial salmon industry to voluntarily label its products as not containing GE material. This places the burden of public disclosure squarely on the existing seafood industry, similar to what the non-GE farm and ranch sector across the nation have been dealing with for years.

While the GE salmon and other foods may ultimately prove safe and wholesome, there is no doubt that they are unlike the foods that most of us grew up on. These are processed food at the most basic level and should be labeled accordingly, particularly when no independent science exists to prove that these products are safe. Such a label is not misleading, nor is it in any way false, it is simply telling the consumer the truth about a type of food that until just a couple decades ago was inconceivable.

Labeling of GE foods boils down to one of the most fundamental of human needs and rights –access to wholesome foods and information about how they are produced. The buying public must be allowed to make an informed choice and labeling will afford them that option. It is our hope that Alaska will encourage Congress to help make meaningful labeling programs available for consumers, particularly if the federal agencies continue to turn a deaf ear to the public.

Thank you for considering ATA's point of view on this matter.

Best regards,



Dale Kelley
Executive Director

² SB 25



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

9369 North Douglas Highway

Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: 907-586-6652

Email: seafa@gci.net

Fax: 907-523-1168

Website: <http://www.seafa.org>

February 27, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes, Chairman
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SUPPORT for HJR 12 Opposing genetically engineered salmon & requiring labeling

Dear Chairman Stutes and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) is in support of HJR 12 opposing genetically engineered salmon approved by the Federal Drug Administration and requiring labeling of the GE salmon. It is important that GE salmon is clearly marked to prevent confusion on the part of the consumer in the marketplace.

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance is a multi-gear, multi-species commercial fishing association representing our 315+ members involved in the salmon, crab, shrimp and longline fisheries of Southeast Alaska.

Sincerely,

Kathy Hansen
Executive Director

Support HJR12
PO Box 232 Petersburg, AK 99833

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association
(907) 772-9323 email:pvoa@gci.net

February 27, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes
Chair, House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislation
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99811-1182

RE: PVOA Supports HJR 12-Opposing the United States Food and Drug Administration's approval of AquaBounty AquAdvantage genetically engineered salmon...

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association (PVOA) is composed of over 100 members participating in a wide variety of species and gear type fisheries. An additional thirty businesses supportive to our industry are members. Our members fish throughout Alaska from Southeast to the Bering Sea. Targeted species include salmon, herring, halibut, sablefish, cod, crab, and shrimp.

PVOA's mission statement is to:

"Promote the economic viability of the commercial fishing fleet in Petersburg, promote the conservation and rational management of North Pacific resources, and advocate the need for protection of fisheries habitat."

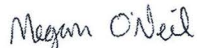
As our mission statement reads, PVOA's main focus is on the conservation and management of our State's fishery resources. **Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association supports HJR12 that opposes the FDA's approval of AquaBounty genetically engineered salmon and urges the U.S. Congress to enact legislation requiring proper labeling of genetically engineered salmon.**

Alaska is a world leader in sustainable wild fishery management. Fishing and seafood processing jobs are the largest job sector in Petersburg and many other coastal communities in Southeast Alaska. PVOA has three major concerns with genetically modified salmon:

1. The long-term affects of consuming genetically modified salmon are not yet known.
2. Our fisheries would be endangered if transgenic fish escaped into the wild.
3. If genetically modified salmon is sold in the U.S. unlabeled, Alaska fishermen and coastal communities will suffer economically from miss-informed consumers.

In closing, PVOA supports HJR12 and thanks the Alaska State Legislature for their support and protection of Alaska's fisheries resource.

Respectfully,



Megan O'Neil
Executive Director



House Fisheries Committee
Representative Stutes, Chair
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support HJR 12 Opposing Genetically Engineered Salmon

Dear Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) supports HJR 12 that opposes GMO salmon and requires prominently labeling genetically engineered products, "Genetically Modified". We support the efforts HJR 12 makes to address the numerous threats that GMO salmon present to Alaska fishermen, the economy of the State of Alaska, and the general public.

SEAS adamantly opposed the United States Food and Drug Administration's approval of genetically engineered salmon. The State of Alaska and an exhaustive list of organizations with diverse fishing interests have spent decades and countless millions of dollars to protect the sustainability, promote the health benefits of consuming wild salmon, and developing robust markets for our products. GMO products threaten the very core of this foundation. The general public at the very least has the right to be able to differentiate all GMO products from other propagated and especially "wild caught" products; and the protection of existing fisheries demands the labeling of such products.

SEAS has represented the interest and concerns of SE Alaska Purse Seine fishermen since 1968. Our membership, concerns, and priorities have varied over these 50 odd years, but one thing has always remained central; that we maintain a system that allows for a sustainable harvest of our fisheries resources that provides economic opportunity to our coastal communities and viability to future generations. We believe GMO products threaten that very principle.

Thank you for your consideration,

Susan Doherty

Executive Director

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

Box 2196, Petersburg AK 99833 * (253) 237-3099 * usag.alaska@gmail.com * akgillnet.org

February 26, 2017

Representative Tarr
Capitol Bldg., Juneau, AK, 99801
rep.geran.tarr@akleg.gov

Dear Representative Tarr and interested others:

RE: SUPPORT for House Joint Resolution 12

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters SUPPORTS House Joint Resolution 12, "*Opposing the United States Food and Drug Administration's approval of AquaBounty AquAdvantage genetically engineered salmon; and urging the United States Congress to enact legislation that requires prominently labeling genetically engineered products with the words "Genetically Modified" on the product's packaging.*"

Like millions of Americans, we strongly oppose FDA's approval and are concerned that these genetically engineered salmon could lead to a host of horrifying realities such as engineered salmon escaping and intermixing with and disrupting wild stocks, ecosystem degradation, resource competition, and confusing buyers of salmon and seafood

FDA believes these fish are safe for human consumption regardless of the lack of studies done to understand potential long-term effects from ingesting such engineered food. If these salmon enter the marketplace, they must be clearly labeled. Regardless of the product form, (whole fresh, frozen fillets, canned, smoked) prominent labeling of every engineered product, such as this Resolution proposes, is critical. At least then Alaska's superior salmon products will be differentiated so consumers can make an informed purchasing decision.

Salmon gillnetters of southeast Alaska feed millions of people worldwide high-quality, wild salmon that is nutritious, untainted, and sustainably-managed. Alaska needs to pass this Resolution to protect our seafood markets and ensure the world our salmon brands are trustworthy.

Thank you,



Cynthia Wallesz
Executive Director

Cc Senator Lisa Murkowski



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: PO Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229
Physical Address: 410 Calhoun Ave Ste 101, Juneau AK 99801
Phone: (907) 586-2820 Fax: (907) 463-2545
Email: ufa@ufafish.org Website: www.ufafish.org

February 27, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes, Chairman
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Support for HJR 12, opposing FDA approval of genetically modified salmon and urging labeling.

Dear Chairman Stutes and Committee Members,

UFA is on record with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in opposition to approval of genetically modified salmon for production and consumption in the U.S., and we have strongly requested that FDA regulations require that any genetically modified salmon or other seafood products be clearly labeled as such.

Alaska leads the world in sustainable fishery management practices and we have gone to great effort and expense to differentiate our seafood products in the marketplace. We are very concerned that if genetically modified salmon is allowed to be sold in the U.S. at all, or not labeled clearly, Alaska fishermen and coastal communities will suffer job losses and economic hardship due to consumer confusion about the wholesomeness of salmon in general.

United Fishermen of Alaska represents 34 Alaska Commercial fishing organizations, and hundreds of individual fishermen and related businesses. We support HJR 12 and applaud the State Legislature for your dedication to Alaska's fisheries and our position in the global marketplace.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator

CC: Representative Geran Tarr

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Tendermen's Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association
Alaska Trollers Association • Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen's Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United
Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance
Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
United Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association

Alaska Dispatch News

Published on *Alaska Dispatch News* (<http://www.adn.com>)

[Home](#) > FDA approves genetically modified salmon for human consumption

Mary Clare Jalonick | Associated Press

November 19, 2015

Main Image:

[salmon1\[PHOTO.68818 - 10/21/2011 16:39:03\]](#) [1]

Main Image Caption:

A genetically modified salmon and traditional farmed Atlantic salmon of the same age.

WASHINGTON — The Food and Drug Administration on Thursday approved genetically modified salmon, the first such altered animal allowed for human consumption in the United States.

The Obama administration had stalled in approving the fast-growing salmon for more than five years amid consumer concerns about eating genetically modified foods. But the agency said Thursday the fish is safe to eat. [2]

"There are no biologically relevant differences in the nutritional profile of AquAdvantage Salmon compared to that of other farm-raised Atlantic salmon," the agency said in announcing the approval.

AquAdvantage Salmon is engineered by the Massachusetts-based company AquaBounty. Ron Stotish, the company's CEO, said in a statement that the fish is a "game changer that brings healthy and nutritious food to consumers in an environmentally responsible manner without damaging the ocean and other marine habitats."

The fish grows twice as fast as normal salmon, so it reaches market size more quickly. It has an added growth hormone from the Pacific chinook salmon that allows the fish to produce growth hormone all year long. The engineers were able to keep the hormone active by using another gene from an eel-like fish called an ocean pout that acts like an "on" switch for the hormone. Typical Atlantic salmon produce the growth hormone for only part of the year.

Bernadette Dunham, director of the FDA's Center for Veterinary Medicine, said the agency "has thoroughly analyzed and evaluated the data and information" submitted by AquaBounty. To approve an engineered animal for human consumption, the agency reviews a company's data and must determine that the food is safe to eat, that the engineering is safe for the fish and that the company's claim — in this case, faster growth — is accurate.

Because there are no material differences between an engineered and a normal salmon, the FDA says the law does not require the fish to be labeled as engineered. That means once the salmon reach stores, consumers may not even know they are eating them. AquaBounty says that genetically modified salmon have the same flavor, texture, color and odor as the conventional fish.

The FDA released separate guidance Thursday that would set guidelines for retailers that do want to label the salmon as engineered.

Under pressure from activists who oppose genetically modified foods, some retailers have pledged not to sell the salmon at all. And it's still unclear whether the public will have an appetite for the fish. Genetic engineering is already widely used for crops, but the government until now has not allowed the consumption of modified animals. Although the potential benefits and profits are huge, some people have ethical qualms about manipulating the genetic code of other living creatures.

Critics call the modified salmon a "frankenfish." They worry that it could cause human allergies and the eventual decimation of the natural salmon population if it escapes and breeds in the wild.

"There's no place on our dinner plates for genetically engineered fish," said Lisa Archer of the environmental advocacy group Friends of the Earth. "We will continue to work to ensure the market, from grocery retailers to restaurants, continues to listen to majority of consumers that don't want to eat this poorly studied, unlabeled, genetically engineered fish."

The salmon has also faced opposition in Congress. Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski, a Republican, has vehemently opposed the approval, saying the engineered salmon could harm her state's wild salmon industry.

Murkowski said Thursday she's "livid" at the FDA approval.

Murkowski and the other members of Alaska's congressional delegation criticized the decision in a joint news release.

Murkowski said it's imperative that proposals she's offered to mandate the labeling of genetically modified fish become law.

U.S. Rep. Don Young said the FDA was embarking on a science experiment with what he calls its "harebrained" decision. Both he and U.S. Sen Dan Sullivan said that, at a minimum, the fish should be labeled.

The FDA said the fish "would not have significant environmental impact." The agency said the salmon can be raised only in land-based, contained hatchery tanks in two facilities in Canada and Panama, and that other facilities in the U.S. or elsewhere cannot breed the salmon for human consumption.

The agency said there are "multiple and redundant levels of physical barriers" in the facilities to prevent the escape of fish. The fish would be bred to be female and sterile, so if any did escape, they would not be able to breed.

The agency said it will inspect the facilities, as will the Canadian and Panamanian governments.

Source URL: <http://www.adn.com/article/20151119/fda-approves-genetically-modified-salmon-human-consumption>

Links:

[1] <http://www.adn.com/image/salmon1photo68818-10212011-163903>

[2] <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm473249.htm>

My Turn: FDA wrong on Frankenfish

Juneau Empire (AK) - December 16, 2015

Author/Byline: REPS. DON YOUNG and PETER DEFAZIO, FOR THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Section: Opinion

Despite overwhelming opposition from scientists, consumers and fishermen, the product commonly referred to as "Frankenfish" could unknowingly be your choice for dinner as early as 2017.

For those unfamiliar with genetically engineered salmon, these products are nothing short of science fiction, recently being described as a scene from the newest "Jurassic Park" film. Genetic material from an ocean pout, an eel-like fish known for its immunity to sub-freezing waters, would be spliced with that of a Chinook (King) salmon and an Atlantic salmon. The resulting organism would grow to the size of an Alaskan king salmon in roughly half the time.

The marketplace approval of AquaBounty Technologies's GE salmon represents a major failure on the part of the FDA. For starters, the approval process failed to consider many of the negative consequences associated with GE fish. This disingenuous process, which followed the same standards for approving a new drug for animal use, never truly considered the risks associated to our wild salmon species, our ocean ecosystems and the U.S. fishing economy. To make matters worse, the FDA's decision explicitly stated that these products would not be required to be labeled as genetically engineered, leaving many American consumers in the dark.

Together, with our colleagues and a large number of American retailers and consumers, we have opposed the FDA's approval of GE salmon. These efforts have included numerous pieces of legislation to ban such products from ever reaching market and others to ensure American consumers have access to clear and transparent labeling of these GE products.

In today's global marketplace, a consumer's access to accurate ingredient information is paramount. Clear and accurate GMO labeling requirements attempt to mitigate the risks of market confusion or rejection by countries that have no interest in purchasing the hybrid organisms. Confusion among consumers about what type of salmon or seafood are genetically engineered could significantly deter shoppers from purchasing these products altogether. Ultimately, we must protect the nation's sustainable, wild-caught seafood industry from the irreparable harms a full-on market rejection of salmon as a safe and nutritious food item would cause.

Most recently, Congress has pursued legislative efforts to block states such as Alaska and Oregon from instituting mandatory labeling requirements of GE fish and seafood. Proponents of this legislation, the so-called Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act, have coalesced around the idea of adding language to an upcoming omnibus spending bill. These efforts would significantly undermine a state's right to develop labeling laws within their own jurisdictions and preempt efforts to give consumers the right to know their fish products were genetically engineered. Given the FDA's recent approval of Frankenfish, we believe this is the last thing Congress should be pursuing.

Together, we have introduced bipartisan legislation in the House that would allow American consumers to decide for themselves. HR 913, the Genetically Engineered Food Right-to-Know Act, will give consumers a clear choice when deciding which products to serve at the dinner table. The bill would require the FDA to clearly label food that has been genetically engineered or contains any genetically engineered ingredients, unless the information is clearly disclosed.

We look forward to you joining our cause to defeat the FDA's disastrous decision to approve GE salmon and at the very least our common sense proposal to give Americans the right to know what they are eating.

Rep. Don Young, R-Alaska, has been Alaska's at-large representative since 1973. He sits on the Natural Resources and the Transportation committees. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Oregon, has represented Oregon's 4th Congressional District since 1987. He sits on the Transportation Committee.

Record: f075be7bbe46ed45d1554abfdc6f51f213d2b7d

Copyright: Copyright, 2015, Juneau Empire

Jan 12 2016

Murkowski Continues Fight Against Frankenfish, Moves to Block FDA Commissioner Nominee

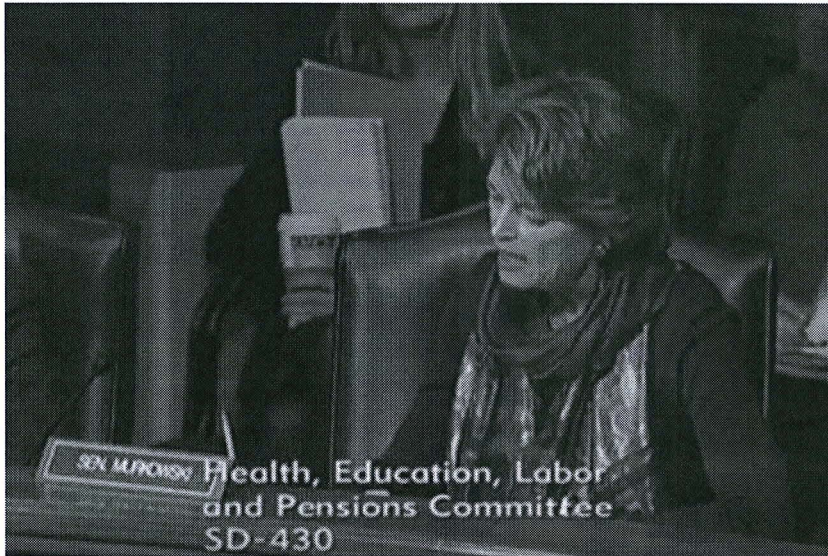
Senator: “Voluntary Labeling of GE Salmon is Not Adequate”

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska) continued her fight against genetically engineered (GE) salmon by announcing in the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee that she would block confirmation proceedings of the nominee to be FDA Commissioner, Dr. Robert Califf, on the Senate floor if her concerns are not resolved. Murkowski made clear that she intends to block Dr. Califf's confirmation until she receives assurance from the FDA that it will require mandatory labeling of GE salmon as it becomes available for human consumption.

In today's HELP committee executive session, Senator Murkowski voted to move Dr. Califf's nomination forward to be considered by the full Senate, saying:

“Dr. Califf's nomination hearing was just 2 days before the FDA made its announcement that they were going to move forward with allowing genetically engineered fish for the first time for human consumption. I have to admit I was really taken aback that he was not direct with me. He clearly knows that's a priority of Alaskans and certainly this Senator. I said at that time I need to have an understanding of where the FDA is going on this issue and I would put a hold on his nomination as it moves forward. We cannot put a hold on anybody until they have moved out of committee. That's what we're doing here today.

“What I would like to make clear to my colleagues is that we have attempted to address some of the issues that I have raised through the appropriations bill that we moved forward in December. We included language that would require the FDA to not allow the introduction into interstate commerce of any product containing genetically engineered salmon until the FDA publishes final labeling guidelines. I want the assurances that in fact is what is going to happen. I want to make sure that the FDA knows that voluntary labeling guidelines really are not sufficient. It does not comply with what is now law. I want to make sure, be very, very certain, that when we are talking about these genetically engineered fish for human consumption, voluntary labeling is not adequate. So I'm going to be pushing for further conversations with Dr. Califf on this. I will vote to move him out of committee today, but I just want my friends and colleagues to be on notice that I have these concerns and I would like to get them resolved before his name moves forward to the Senate floor.”



(Click image to watch video.)

Background: Last November the FDA announced its approval of genetically engineered salmon for human consumption. Murkowski has long been adamantly opposed to the approval of GE salmon, and in response to this announcement inserted a provision in the appropriations process to require mandatory labeling of Frankenfish. At that time she also announced that she would block the confirmation of Dr. Califf to be FDA Commissioner.

Murkowski is chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee.

Permalink: <http://www.murkowski.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2016/1/murkowski-continues-fight-against-frankenfish-moves-to-block-fda-commissioner-nominee>