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UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

February 6, 2004

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Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Peggy Wilson, Vice Chair
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol (Mail stop 3100)
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representatives Seaton and Wilson,

United Fishermen of Alaska supports HJR 34 regarding the USDA Trade Adjustment Assistance program. The purpose of the program is to provide assistance to help fishermen and farmers impacted by increased foreign trade, but the details of the program's requirements do not fit the situations of large numbers of fishermen, as many legislators and people in fishing communities are aware of.

HJR 34 will help convey broad support for technical and interpretive changes that if enacted by the USDA and Farm Service Agency, will help provide to salmon fishermen the technical assistance, retraining benefits and price adjustment assistance that we feel are the intended in the program.

We support the work of the Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force in addressing the aspects of the program that have prevented many Alaska fishermen from qualifying although they certainly suffered from increased imports.

United Fishermen of Alaska represents 33 Alaska Commercial fishing organizations and hundreds of individual fishermen and fishing related businesses, altogether representing over 10,000 Alaska fishermen. We support HJR 32 and thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Vinsel
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Crab Coalition • Alaska Druggers Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Trollers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Chignik Regional Aquaculture Association • Chignik Seiners Association • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen • Cordova District Fishermen United
Crab Rationalization and Buyback Group • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association
Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Pacific Scallop Cooperative • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
Old Harbor Fishermen's Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owners Association
Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners Association • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association
United Catcher Boats • United Salmon Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association • Western Gulf of Alaska Fishermen

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)

TAA Reform Act of 2002

- TAA programs are available to assist individuals who have become unemployed as a result of increased imports or shifts in production to other countries.
- The goal is to help laid-off workers return to suitable employment as quickly as possible.
- This is a federal program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and through state employment security agencies.

Qualifying Requirements

The worker must have been laid off from a certified company during the approved certification dates.

Program Benefits

TAA includes a variety of benefits and reemployment services to help unemployed workers prepare for and obtain suitable employment. Workers are eligible for:

- **Reemployment services:** Reemployment services are available to TAA clients through local One-Stop Job Centers. Services include employment counseling, resume preparation, interviewing skills, etc.
- **Training:** Training opportunities include on-the-job, vocational or technical training and remedial education. TAA pays 100% tuition, books, fees and travel to training. TAA will also pay costs of rent, food and utilities at the training location if the worker is maintaining two separate households. Maximum length of training is 104 weeks or 130 weeks if remedial education is needed.
- **Job Search Allowance:** A job search allowance is payable to cover expenses incurred in seeking employment outside the normal commuting area. A worker may be paid 90 percent of necessary transportation and living expenses (up to a maximum of \$1,250) while searching for such employment.
- **Health Care Tax Credit:** The Trade Act of 2002 created a tax credit of 65% of the cost of a health plan premium for eligible individuals and qualified family members who are enrolled in qualified health plans. Tax credits may be advanced or claimed at the end of year. Eligible individuals include TAA participants receiving weekly TRA benefits, those who are eligible to receive TRA but are still receiving their Unemployment Insurance (UI), and ATAA participants. For information: <http://www.irs.gov>, keyword: HCTC.
- **Relocation Allowance:** When a worker is successful in obtaining employment outside his normal commuting area, the TAA program offers relocation assistance to help them relocate to the new area of employment. A relocation allowance pays 90 percent of the reasonable and necessary expenses of moving the worker and family, household goods and personal belongings to the new location. Additionally, the worker will receive a lump sum payment equal to three times his former average weekly wage (up to a maximum of \$1,250) to help them get settled.
- **Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA):** TRA is a weekly benefit that begins after Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits exhaust. To qualify for TRA the worker must have worked at least 26 weeks in the 52-week period prior to his separation date. To be eligible for TRA, the worker must be enrolled in a training program approved no later than the last day of the 16th week after the worker's most recent TAA qualifying separation; or the last day of the 8th week after the U.S. Department of Labor issues the certification, or be on a waiver. The weekly TRA amount is the same as UI, and basic TRA usually lasts 26 weeks after UI is exhausted. Workers approved for training within 210 days of his layoff date or the company's certification date, whichever is later, may receive up to 52 additional weeks of TRA to complete a training program. In no event may an individual receive more than 130 weeks of allowances.
- **Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA):** Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance is available for a worker over the age of 50 who is laid off from a company that has been certified for ATAA. A worker may choose to receive payments of 50 percent of the difference between pre-layoff wage and his reemployment wage. He must be re-employed within 26 weeks of his layoff date in a full-time job that pays less than \$50,000 per year to be eligible. A participant can receive up to \$10,000 as a wage subsidy over a two-year period. Once the participant chooses ATAA, they are ineligible to receive training benefits or TRA weekly benefits.

Alaska State Legislature

Chair **Vice Chair**
Seaton Wilson

Members
Gara
Guttenberg
Heinze
Ogg
Samuels



State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3306
(907) 465-3472

House Special Committee on Fisheries

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Fisheries Committee Members and Chief Clerk

FM: Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
House Fisheries Committee

DATE: February 4th, 2004

RE: Weekly Schedule: Monday, February 9th—Friday, February 13th

Room # 124

Monday, February 9th, 9:00—11:00am

- +* HJR 34 Trade Adjustment Assistance
- +* HB 410 Permit Buy-back Programs
- +* HB 409 Max Length Seine Vessels

Wednesday, February 11th, 8:30—10:00am

- +* HJR 36 Glacier Bay Mitigation

Bills previously heard/scheduled

Friday, February 13th, 8:30—10:00am

No meeting scheduled

23-LS1408(S)
Utermohle
2/3/04

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES OGG BY REQUEST OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE SALMON
INDUSTRY TASK FORCE, Wilson**

A RESOLUTION

1 **Requesting the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States**
2 **Department of Labor to extend Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits to Alaska salmon**
3 **fishermen; requesting the United States Congress and the United States Department of**
4 **Agriculture to extend additional disaster and price support benefits to Alaska salmon**
5 **fishermen; and requesting the United States Department of Commerce to establish a**
6 **Trade Adjustment Assistance program specific to commercial [salmon] fishermen.**

7 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

8 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance
9 program provides job search, relocation assistance, and retraining benefits for qualified
10 worker groups; and

11 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Agriculture Trade Adjustment
12 Assistance program provides eligibility for qualified persons to receive retraining benefits
13 through the United States Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance program; and

14 **WHEREAS** Alaska salmon fishermen are currently required to show a net decline in

1 fishing earnings from 2001 to 2002 in order to be eligible for the United States Department of
2 Agriculture Trade Adjustment Assistance program; and

3 **WHEREAS** many Alaska salmon fishermen experienced reduced fishing earnings in
4 2001 due to the decline in the price of all five Alaska salmon species as the result of increased
5 imports of foreign salmon, price-related work stoppages, and closures of processor markets
6 and thus were not able to participate in the United States Department of Agriculture Trade
7 Adjustment Assistance program because they could not demonstrate a net decline in fishing
8 earnings from 2001 to 2002; and

9 **WHEREAS** many Alaska salmon fishermen did not fish at all in 2002 because they
10 had been informed by fish processors and buyers to whom they had traditionally sold their
11 catch that the fish processors and buyers would not purchase salmon during 2002 and thus
12 these fishermen were not eligible for commodity-based United States Department of
13 Agriculture Trade Adjustment Assistance price adjustment payments or for United States
14 Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance program retraining benefits; and

15 **WHEREAS** alternative job opportunities are uncommon in many of the rural areas
16 where Alaska salmon fishermen live;

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United
18 States Department of Agriculture to extend price adjustment benefits under the Trade
19 Adjustment Assistance program to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished in five of the six
20 years from 1997 to 2002, inclusive, if the fishermen can certify a loss in income from salmon
21 fishing in any of those years due to import-related price fluctuations or were prevented from
22 fishing for salmon in any of those years due to loss of market caused by import-related price
23 fluctuations; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
25 United States Department of Labor to extend retraining benefits under the Trade Adjustment
26 Assistance program to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished in five of the six years from 1997
27 to 2002, inclusive, even if the fishermen did not fish the preceding year due to import-related
28 price fluctuations or due to loss of market caused by import-related price fluctuations; and be
29 it

30 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
31 the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture extend additional

1 disaster and price support benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished in five of the six
2 years from 1997 to 2002, inclusive, and continued fishing during periods of disaster or market
3 declines by taking the necessary legislative and administrative action to include each species
4 of Alaska salmon as "covered/eligible" commodities for purposes of the Noninsured Crop
5 Disaster Assistance program, Livestock Compensation program, and Loan Deficiency
6 Payment program; and be it

7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
8 the United States Department of Commerce pursue the establishment of a Trade Adjustment
9 Assistance program specific to commercial salmon fishermen.

10 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ann Veneman, United
11 States Secretary of Agriculture; the Honorable Elaine Chao, United States Secretary of Labor;
12 the Honorable Don Evans, United States Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Ted Stevens,
13 President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate and member of the Alaska delegation in Congress;
14 the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and to the
15 Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
16 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.



Committee Assignments:

Member:

House Special Committee on Fisheries
House Special Committee on Education
House Transportation Committee
House Judiciary Committee

Dan Ogg
Representative

Session:
Room 409
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: 907-465-2487
Toll Free: 800-865-2487
Fax: 907-465-4956
Email: rep.dan.ogg@legis.state.ak.us

Interim:
112 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
Phone: 907-486-8872
Fax: 907-486-5264

SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Joint Resolution 34

2/2/04

"A Resolution requesting the United States Department of Labor to extend Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen; requesting the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to extend additional disaster and price support benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen; and requesting the United States Department of Commerce to establish a Trade Adjustment Assistance program specific to commercial fishermen."

In recent years, Alaska salmon fishermen have seen dramatically reduced prices for their salmon catches due to imported salmon flooding the market. Many salmon fishermen could not fish at all in 2002 or 2003 because the processors who traditionally bought their catch made the decision not to buy salmon because of devastatingly low prices.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the United States Department of Labor have Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs that were designed to help workers whose industries have been hurt by imports. As a result of efforts by Sen. Lisa Murkowski last year, Alaska salmon fishermen were made eligible for these TAA programs. However, the programs were designed primarily for agricultural workers and have proven difficult for fishermen to navigate.

It is undisputed that Alaska salmon fishermen have suffered price declines due to foreign imports. But salmon fishermen may not show a net fishing income decline from one year to the next because they received other income. For instance, in 2002 some fishermen received Exxon payments from the 1989 oil spill, thereby making many of them ineligible for TAA. This resolution urges the federal government to make adjustments to the existing program to accommodate the current petition and to ultimately create a separate program designed to better suit the unique qualities of the commercial fishing industry.

District 36 - Kodiak Island Borough/Lake & Peninsula Borough

Aktvik • Chiniak • Karluk • Kodiak • Larsen Bay • Old Harbor • Ouzinkie • Port Lions
Iguigig • Iliamna • Kokhanok • Levelock • Newhalen • Nondalton • Pedro Bay • Port Alsworth

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SPONSOR STATEMENT – HJR 34

Page Two

In light of the continuing downturn in the salmon market, many fishermen are eager to learn new skills to make them viable in a competitive job market. As it stands now, however, retraining benefits from the U.S. Dept. of Labor are only available if the fishermen qualify for the USDA TAA price adjustment benefits.

In order to make the TAA programs a better fit for commercial fishermen the resolution makes four specific requests:

- 1) It asks that the USDA give price-adjustment benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished five of six years from 1997 to 2002 and subsequent qualifying years if the fishermen can prove they lost income in any one of those five years due to imports or they lost their market due to imports. This would remove the requirement that fishermen show a net income loss from one year to the next, providing instead for a loss over a period of time.
- 2) It asks that the U.S. Dept. of Labor extend retraining benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished in five of the six years from 1997 to 2002 even if the fishermen did not fish in the preceding year due to impacts from price fluctuations or loss of market.
- 3) It asks that the U.S. Congress and the USDA make Alaska salmon a covered commodity, which makes Alaska salmon fishermen eligible for other disaster and price support benefits.
- 4) It asks that the U.S. Secretary of Commerce pursue the creation of a TAA program specific to commercial fishermen.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE OGG BY REQUEST OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE SALMON INDUSTRY TASK
FORCE

Introduced: 1/28/04

Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries, Labor and Commerce

A RESOLUTION

1 Requesting the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States
2 Department of Labor to extend Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits to Alaska
3 fishermen; requesting the United States Congress and the United States Department of
4 Agriculture to extend additional disaster and price support benefits to Alaska salmon
5 fishermen; and requesting the United States Department of Agriculture to establish
6 terminal markets in Alaska for all covered commodities including salmon.

7 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

8 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance
9 program provides job search, relocation assistance, and retraining benefits for qualified
10 worker groups; and

11 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Agriculture Trade Adjustment
12 Assistance program provides eligibility for qualified persons to receive retraining benefits
13 through the United States Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance program; and

14 **WHEREAS** Alaska fishermen are currently required to show a net decline in fishing

1 earnings from 2001 to 2002 in order to be eligible for the United States Department of
2 Agriculture Trade Adjustment Assistance program; and

3 **WHEREAS** many Alaska fishermen experienced reduced fishing earnings in 2001
4 due to the decline in the price of all five Alaska salmon species as the result of increased
5 imports of foreign salmon, price-related work stoppages, and closures of processor markets
6 and thus were not able to participate in the United States Department of Agriculture Trade
7 Adjustment Assistance program because they could not demonstrate a net decline in fishing
8 earnings from 2001 to 2002; and

9 **WHEREAS** many Alaska fishermen did not fish at all in 2002 because they had been
10 informed by fish processors and buyers to whom they had traditionally sold their catch that
11 the fish processors and buyers would not purchase salmon during 2002 and thus these
12 fishermen were not eligible for commodity-based United States Department of Agriculture
13 Trade Adjustment Assistance price adjustment payments or for United States Department of
14 Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance program retraining benefits; and

15 **WHEREAS** alternative job opportunities are uncommon in many of the rural areas
16 where Alaska fishermen live; and

X [17 **WHEREAS** the costs of relocation are generally much higher for Alaska fishermen
18 than for persons living in other states due to the expense of travel both within the state and to
19 other states;

20 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United
21 States Department of Agriculture to extend cash benefits under the Trade Adjustment
22 Assistance program to Alaska fishermen who fished in five of the six years from 1997 to
23 2002, inclusive, if the fishermen can certify a loss in income from salmon fishing in any of
24 those years or were prevented from fishing for salmon in any of those years; and be it
due to import related price fluctuations - processor market

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
26 United States Department of Labor to extend retraining benefits under the Trade Adjustment
27 Assistance program to Alaska fishermen who fished in five of the six years from 1997 to
28 2002, inclusive, even if the fishermen either had reduced fishing earnings in 2001 or did not
29 fish in 2002; and be it

30 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
31 the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture extend additional

1 disaster and price support benefits to Alaska salmon fishermen who fished in five of the six
2 years from 1997 to 2002, inclusive, and continued fishing during periods of disaster or market
3 declines by taking the necessary legislative and administrative action to include all species of
4 Alaska salmon as "covered/eligible" commodities for purposes of the Noninsured Crop
5 Disaster Assistance program, Livestock Compensation program, and Loan Deficiency
6 Payment program; and be it

X [7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
8 the United States Department of Agriculture establish terminal markets in Alaska for all
9 covered commodities, including each species of salmon.

10 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ann Veneman, United
11 States Secretary of Agriculture; the Honorable Elaine Chao, United States Secretary of Labor;
12 the Honorable Ted Stevens, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate and member of the
13 Alaska delegation in Congress; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of
14 Representatives; and to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don
15 Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.