



Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

January 26, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing to request expeditious action on the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute's request on behalf of the Alaska seafood industry to purchase Alaska seafood through the USDA Section 32 program. We appreciate what USDA has done to improve seafood consumption in its Food and Nutrition Service program and we urge the USDA to continue Section 32 purchases of Alaska seafood through 2024. These purchases are invaluable in supporting our fishermen, processors, and coastal communities while they attempt to navigate through very unfavorable global market conditions.

Russian sourced fish which are reprocessed in China have flooded the US markets at low prices. While the recent U.S. Executive Order 14068 is intended to close this door, it does not change the fact that seafood processors have been and are forced to sell into the depressed market to further avoid expensive holding costs. This is having an adverse ripple effect back to our fishermen, processors, and fishing communities and is causing constriction of the overall industry.

USDA programs supported by Section 32 funds were designed to provide food-insecure Americans with access to a nutritious diet and to stabilize prices through surplus food distribution. We therefore join a previous request from our Alaska congressional delegation that you proceed with purchases of Alaska seafood, particularly salmon, for Section 32 purchase requests through 2024.

These purchases are badly needed to help stabilize market conditions and decrease inventories prior to the 2024 season. **Timing is critical as seafood processors will soon be attempting to obtain financing for the 2024 pack.** USDA purchases are critical in helping to support market prices which are the linchpin of the entire U.S. seafood supply chain. Your purchases not only benefit American consumers but our seafood industry which provides more direct jobs than any other industry in our State.

While following through on U.S. seafood purchase commitments as soon as possible is the most direct and timely way to support the Alaska seafood industry during these challenging times, we also seek your support for additional measures at USDA that could serve to support the seafood industry.



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Seafood is currently not integrated into many USDA policies or programs designed to ensure domestic food security, supply chain integrity, and support for U.S. harvesting and processing businesses, at the same level as terrestrial sources of protein. To the greatest extent possible, we request your leadership in integrating U.S. seafood production into national food policy strategies and all USDA programs designed to support America's food production.

Thank you for considering continued and expeditious Section 32 purchases of Alaska seafood through 2024.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Senator Gary Stevens.

Senator Gary Stevens
President
District C

A blue ink signature of Senator Cathy Giessel.

Senator Cathy Giessel
Majority Leader
District E

A blue ink signature of Senator Bill Wielechowski.

Senator Bill Wielechowski
Rules Chair
District K

A blue ink signature of Senator Bert Stedman.

Senator Bert Stedman
District A

A blue ink signature of Senator Löki Tobin.

Senator Löki Tobin
District I

A blue ink signature of Senator Scott Kawasaki.

Senator Scott Kawasaki
District P

A blue ink signature of Senator Jesse Kiehl.

Senator Jesse Kiehl
District B

A blue ink signature of Senator Forrest Dunbar.

Senator Forrest Dunbar
District J

A blue ink signature of Senator Robert Myers.

Senator Robert Myers
District Q

A blue ink signature of Senator Jesse Bjorkman.

Senator Jesse Bjorkman
District D

A blue ink signature of Senator Kelly Merrick.

Senator Kelly Merrick
District L

A blue ink signature of Senator Click Bishop.

Senator Click Bishop
District R

A blue ink signature of Senator James Kaufman.

Senator James Kaufman
District F

A blue ink signature of Senator Shelley Hughes.

Senator Shelley Hughes
District M

A blue ink signature of Senator Lyman Hoffman.

Senator Lyman Hoffman
District S



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Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
District G

Senator David Wilson
District N

Senator Donny Olson
District T

Senator Matt Claman
District H

Senator Mike Shower
District O

Speaker Rep. Cathy Tilton
District 26 – Wasilla

Rules Chair Rep. Craig Johnson
District 10 - Anchorage

Rep. Calvin Schrage
District 12 – Anchorage

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Rep. Genevieve Mina
District 19 – Anchorage

Rep. Andrew Gray
District 20 – Anchorage



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Handwritten signature of Donna C. Mears in black ink.

Rep. Donna Mears
District 21 – Anchorage

Handwritten signature of Stanley Wright in blue ink.

Rep. Stanley Wright
District 22 – Anchorage

Handwritten signature of Kevin McCabe in black ink.

Rep. Kevin McCabe
District 30 – Big Lake

Handwritten signature of Maxine Dibert in black ink.

Rep. Maxine Dibert
District 31 - Fairbanks

Handwritten signature of Mike Prax in black ink.

Rep. Mike Prax
District 33 - North Pole

Handwritten signature of Ashley E. Carrick in black ink.

Rep. Ashley Carrick
District 35 - Fairbanks

Handwritten signature of Bryce Edgmon in blue ink.

Rep. Bryce Edgmon
District 37 - Dillingham

Handwritten signature of Neal Foster in blue ink.

Rep. Neal Foster
District 39 - Nome

Handwritten signature of DeLena Johnson in blue ink.

Rep. DeLena Johnson
District 25 - Palmer

Handwritten signature of Sarah Vance in blue ink.

Rep. Sarah Vance
District 6 - Homer

CC:

U.S. Representative Mary Peltola

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

Governor of Alaska Michael Dunleavy