



Fish News

March 7, 2008

Stevens Introduces Bill Suspending New Vessel Discharge Permit Requirements Pending Review by Coast Guard

Last month, Senator Ted Stevens (R) Alaska introduced legislation (S. 2645) that would suspend any new vessel discharge permit requirements pending a two-year review by the United States Coast Guard. The Vessel Discharge Evaluation and Review Act, if enacted, would continue the exceptions currently allowed for discharges (gray water, bilge water, ballast water and deck runoff) incidental to the normal operation of vessels, until the evaluation is completed. Once the evaluation is completed and verified for accuracy, the bill would direct the Coast Guard to establish uniform national discharge standards for most commercial vessels operating in U.S. waters. Stevens' bill would also include an exemption for vessels that are less than 79 feet in length.



S. 2645 comes on the heels of the Environmental Protection Act's (EPA) permit requirement for discharges that are incidental to normal vessel operations. The permit requirement could potentially affect millions of recreational boats, fishing vessels, freight and gray water.

In the past, the EPA combined commercial and sport fishing vessels under a general discharge permit. In 1999, environmentalists, led by Northwest Environmental Advocates based in Portland, Oregon, petitioned the EPA, requesting that certain discharges from vessels, including ballast water, not be excluded from the requirement to obtain a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit under the



Clean Water Act. The groups are concerned that ballast water taken onboard to balance ships and then discharged into U.S. waters can bring non-invasive species into U.S. aquatic ecosystems. The EPA denied the petition, so environmental groups sued. In March 2005, the court decided that the EPA regulation that excluded discharges exceeded the agency's authority under the

Clean Water Act. In September 2006, the court revoked the exclusions, but gave the EPA two years to develop a permit program.

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Candidates Vying for Congressional Seat to Debate Fisheries Issues in Kodiak

Five candidates campaigning for Alaska's lone seat in the U.S. House of Representatives will debate fisheries issues in Kodiak next month. Congressman Don Young and Gabrielle LeDoux, both Republicans, and Democrats Diane Benson, Ethan Berkowitz and Jake Metcalfe have agreed to jump into the ring and tackle the issues.

For the past 17 years, the fisheries debates, which kick off the annual ComFish Alaska trade show, have drawn candidates running for Alaska governor and U.S. Senate. This will be the first time that U.S. House candidates participate.

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Exxon Makes Its Penultimate Appeal in U.S. Supreme Court

Oil Giant Asks Court to throw out \$2.5 billion verdict against Exxon

Last week, Exxon argued in Supreme Court that justices should dismiss a \$2.5 billion verdict against the oil giant for its role in \$11 million crude oil spill in Prince William Sound. Exxon's appeal is based on a maritime law established in 1818 that says ship owners are not liable for their agents at sea unless they are complicit in their behavior.



However, Jeffrey Fisher, the attorney who argued the case for 30,000-plus Alaska fishermen, says Exxon knew for three years that Captain Joseph Hazelwood was an alcoholic and failed to act appropriately. The Alaska plaintiffs are facing a high court that has made a joint effort in recent years to cut back high punitive damage awards. One factor

working in the plaintiffs' favor is that Justice Samuel Alito recused himself because he owns more than a thousand shares of Exxon Mobil stock. That makes it more difficult to assemble five votes to overturn the \$2.5 billion verdict upheld by the lower courts. A 4-4 split would favor the plaintiffs (the Alaska fishermen).

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[Link to sidebar story](#)

NPFMC to Consider Cod Sector Split; LLPs; Changes to Crab Rationalization

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) is scheduled to take up several big issues in the weeks and months to come, including the Pacific cod sector split,

and a proposal to eliminate LLPs in the Gulf of Alaska that have been unused for several year. The following is a summary of those issues from NPFMC member Sam Cotten.

Cod Sector Split: Dividing or allocating Pacific cod among the different sectors (trawl, hook and line, pot and jig) will affect all cod fishermen in the Gulf of Alaska. This issue is scheduled to come up for initial review at the June council meeting in Kodiak. In general, the split would be based on each sector's harvest history. Some of the challenges will be to decide which years to assign or how to achieve a split that will be fair to all gear types. Other issues associated with locking in sectors include halibut by catch (106 metric tons taken and discarded by the hook and line sector and 60.4 tons by the trawl sector in the western gulf in 2006).



Trawl LLP Recency: See the North Pacific Fishery Management Council "News and Notes" newsletter @ www.fakr.noaa.gov/npfmc.

Gulf of Alaska Fixed Gear LLP Recency: Also scheduled for the June Kodiak meeting is another cod issue that may affect fishermen in the Gulf of Alaska: the proposal to eliminate LLPs that have not been used for several years. In order to have received an LLP in the first place, you needed to have had at least one landing from Jan. 1, 1992 to June 17, 1995. This proposal considers removing the LLP unless it landed fish from 2000 to 2005 and possibly 2006. Different alternatives suggest different levels of participation from 1 landing to 5 landings and from 5 metric tons to 100 metric tons. Exemptions are being considered for jig vessels.

Crab Rationalization: The council is taking a close look at the crab program and is considering changes to the 90/10 split, crew shares issues and community issues. The next crab committee meeting is scheduled for April 1, 2008 at the Anchorage Hilton Hotel.

For more information, go to the link below or call Sam Cotten at (907) 242-1197.

Three Companies Bid on the Sand Point Harbor Wharf Project

Apparent Low Bidder is Western Marine Construction

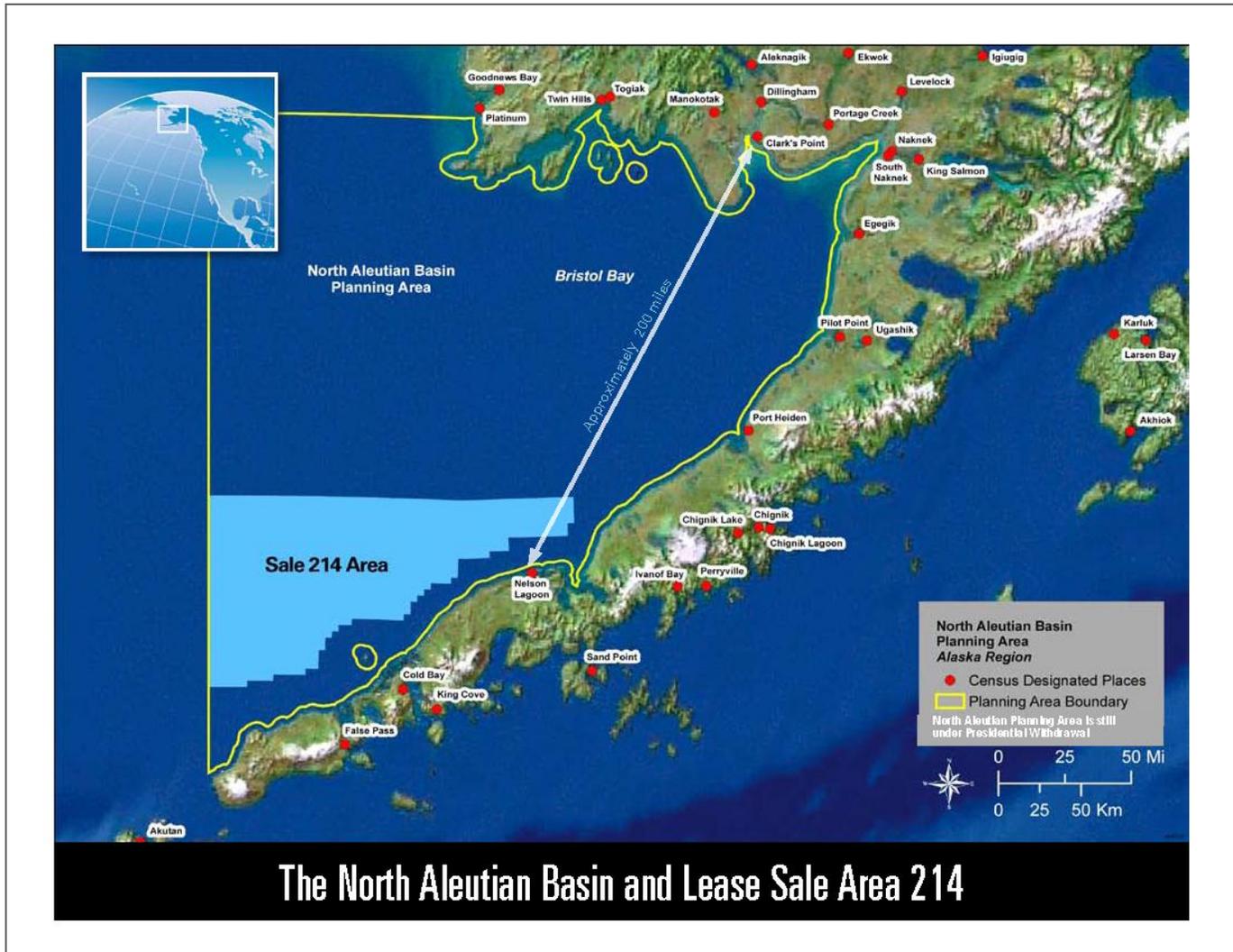
On Feb. 14, 2008, three construction firms entered bids for the Sand Point harbor wharf project. The Borough has no plans to award the contract until after the Economic Development Administration has approved the process used for bidding, but notes Western Marine Construction is the apparent low bidder. Western Marine's bid came in at \$2,975,000.



The engineer's estimate for the project is approximately \$3,035,000. The Borough hopes to begin construction this spring.

Dialogue Sought on Oil and Gas Development in the North Aleutian Basin

Anchorage, Alaska – Fishermen, community leaders, Alaska Natives, scientists, government officials, environmental groups, and representatives from energy companies will meet in Anchorage to discuss what’s needed to safely develop oil and gas in the



North Aleutian Basin, a sprawling region that includes part of salmon-rich Bristol Bay.

The [North Aleutians Basin Energy-Fisheries Workshop](#), scheduled for March 18–19 at the Anchorage Marriot Downtown Hotel, is aimed at continuing a dialogue that began

last October, when key stakeholders outlined their positions on development and organized the agenda for the March 2008 meeting.

The meeting seeks insights into the economic, social, and environmental questions that must be addressed to make energy development environmentally safe as well as socially and economically beneficial for the region's residents. It also offers a chance for the energy and fisheries industries to learn about each other's operations.

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Aleutia Seeks a Tender for the 2008 Salmon Season



Aleutia is looking for a tender for the 2008 salmon season, based out of Sand Point. Knowledge of the surrounding area required. Interested parties should contact Tiffany Jackson at the Aleutia office at (907) 383-5909 or email: Aleutia_tiffany@arctic.net:



Aleutia Begins Selling Commercial Crewmember/Sports Fishing Licences

The Aleutia office now sells commercial fishing crewmember licenses and sports fishing licenses. Those in need of a license can stop by the Sand Point office and see Tiffany Jackson, Aleutia Operations Manager, to purchase one. Tiffany can be reached at (907) 383-5909 or email: Aleutia_tiffany@arctic.net.

Become an Aleutia Member: 2008 Aleutia Memberships Available



Join the Aleutia fishery in one of Alaska's most beautiful, wild and dramatic regions. Capture the flavor of this treasured resource – Aleutia sockeye salmon.

2007 Aleutia memberships have expired. All permit holders can re-apply for 2008

memberships. Membership forms are available at the office in Sand Point or visit the link below.

[Aleutia Membership Application Form](#)

[Aleutia Web site link](#)

Find One-of-a-Kind Aleutia Products on Zazzle.com

Looking for a special gift for someone that reflects the fishing tradition of our region? Aleutia has several unique products with the Aleutia logo for sale on Zazzle.com. You can find an Aleutia mouse pad, coffee mug, magnet, keychain, bumper sticker and more. Check out the link below for Aleutia one-of-a-kind products.

[Link to Zazzle.com](#)

Fill Your Freezer with Delicious Aleutia Sockeye Salmon



Craving premium-quality, all-natural Aleutia sockeye salmon? If your freezer is empty, and your mouth is watering for the full-flavored, rich taste of sockeye salmon, Aleutia still has some fillets left. Get 'em while supplies last. It costs \$141.63 for a 25-pound box.

Call the Aleutia office at (907) 383-5909 or email Tiffany Jackson at Aleutia_Tiffany@arctic.net.

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