



RESOLUTION 24-25

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH RECOMMENDING ACTIONS TO SUPPORT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS AND RESILIENCE OF THE ALASKA SEAFOOD INDUSTRY

WHEREAS, commercial fishing is critically important to the Aleutians East Borough, its communities, and residents including the local fishing fleets, and

WHEREAS, Alaska seafood currently faces exceptional national and global challenges including trade policy and non-reciprocal tariffs that favor other nations, high supply/inventory, high costs/inflation, reduced consumer demand, and global competitors that are less regulated, less sustainable, and/or have lower operating costs than domestic seafood producers, and

WHEREAS, these challenges have directly negatively impacted the economic viability of commercial fishing for processors and fishermen operating in the Aleutians East Borough in recent years resulting in decreased fishing opportunities, processing capacity, and fish landing taxes, and

WHEREAS, to address these issues NOAA is currently creating an implementation plan for the National Seafood Strategy which necessitates collaboration across multiple national agencies that affect the viability of Alaska seafood, and

WHEREAS, the Federal government's Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee issued the 2023 National Export Strategy that includes a chapter on Seafood Industries, highlighting forthcoming efforts to improve interagency coordination and global market competitiveness for domestic seafood producers, and

WHEREAS, several strategies have been outlined by federal agencies in an effort to:

Improve and expand existing agency functions that support US seafood, including:

- Improve coordination and collaboration across multiple federal governmental agencies that affect the economic viability of Alaska seafood via the implementation plan for NOAA's National Seafood Strategy and Chapter 9 of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee's 2023 National Export Strategy
- Expand use of USDA Foreign Agricultural Service trade missions and other export market development assistance to include seafood
- Improve the efficacy (e.g., timing, scope) of and maintain or increase the use of government purchasing programs for Alaska produced seafood
- Improve the utility and applicability of governmental policies on recapitalization, vessel construction, tax structures, workforce accessibility, energy, and infrastructure
- Increase government funding for new product development, testing, promotion, and marketing of US produced seafood (e.g., NOAA's Saltonstall-Kennedy grant program)

- Strengthen government planning for and execution of fisheries science and management, especially as needed to improve our understanding of and response to climate impacts on living marine resources

Integrate US seafood production into national food policy strategies and USDA programs designed to support domestic food production, including:

- Create an Office of Seafood Policy and Program Integration within USDA to fully integrate US seafood into USDA policy strategies and programs designed to ensure domestic food security, supply chain integrity, and support for harvesting and processing businesses, similar to other terrestrial sources of protein; coordinate USDA seafood support programs with seafood-related programs of other agencies; and provide a point of entry for seafood producers to more effectively engage with USDA
- Increase re-investment in US seafood producers and related support businesses via expanding eligibility of USDA low-interest loans or loan guarantees to fishermen and processors
- Fully integrate seafood and seafood nutritional guidance into national strategies for improving public health and nutrition

Restore fairness and reciprocity for international trade in U.S. seafood products, including:

- Embed and improve seafood expertise and leadership in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to coordinate seafood trade objectives among USTR offices, coordinate USTR seafood trade programs with seafood efforts of other agencies, and provide a point of entry for seafood producers to more effectively engage with USTR
- Improve trade policy via USTR and other agencies to create a more reciprocal tariff structure for seafood exports and imports, reduce burden and risk associated with non-tariff barriers, and develop more effective tools for monitoring supply chain traceability and deterring Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing
- Resolve the unbalanced and unfair seafood trade relationship between Russia and the United States

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Aleutians East Borough Assembly supports these efforts by the federal government to improve the competitiveness and resiliency of the Alaska seafood industry.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Aleutians East Borough on this 11th day of January 2024.


Alvin D. Osterback, Mayor

ATTEST:


Beverly Rosete, Clerk