



## **ALASKA SALMON PROCESSORS PULL BACK FROM MSC, FAO-BASED CERTIFICATION GETS A BOOST**

**Juneau, Alaska. January 18, 2012** –The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) has been notified that Alaska salmon processors are phasing out their funding for certification of the Alaska salmon fishery to the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) standard.

Alaska General Seafoods, E&E Seafoods, Icicle Seafoods, Kwik’Pak Fisheries, North Pacific Seafoods, Ocean Beauty Seafoods, Peter Pan Seafoods, Seafood Producers COOP and Trident Seafoods, who comprise 75% of the salmon harvest, contacted ASMI following an announcement by the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) that AFDF intends to withdraw from its role as client and maintain Alaska salmon MSC certification only until the current certificate expires October 29, 2012.

It is important to note that all Alaska salmon harvested during the 2012 fishing season will remain eligible to carry the MSC logo and be sold as certified as long as the participating entities maintain valid MSC Chain of Custody certification.

Alaska officials note that the MSC certification did not make Alaska salmon sustainable. In fact, Alaska is not new to sustainability – all seafood from Alaska is sustainable, regardless of certification, thanks to Alaska’s long track record of both state and federal management.

- Since Alaska became a state in 1959, the Alaska State Constitution has mandated management of fishery resources on the sustained yield principle – the only state in the country with such explicit conservation language in its constitution.
- Alaska has been a world leader in sustainable fisheries for decades.

“Alaska fisheries have been built on a firm foundation: a constitutional mandate for sustained yield, a commitment to scientific research, and to serve the Alaska people,” states Governor Sean Parnell. “Fishing and seafood processing employ more people than any other industry in Alaska, so whether certified or not, Alaskans know that being responsible stewards of this natural resource directly translates into sustainable Alaska communities.”

“The Alaska seafood industry understands that 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification is a market tool that provides assurance to retailers and foodservice operators that seafood is responsibly managed. For those customers who make the choice for certification, we are providing a 3<sup>rd</sup> party certification that equals or exceeds any method currently in the marketplace through the Alaska FAO-Based model,” says ASMI Executive Director Ray Riutta.



“We have also heard from customers that not everyone requires certification because they already know about Alaska’s 50+ years of leadership and commitment to sustainability. While we do have a credible certification; Alaska’s marketable traits extend well beyond sustainability,” says Riutta, “Alaska salmon processors are already working with customers to begin the transition from MSC.”

“We are pleased that the Responsible Fisheries Management certification model has taken hold. It’s a model that fits the purpose of what certification should be about – providing credible verification that fishery management is conducted in accordance with accepted international norms, leaving actual management decisions up to our professional staff,” states Commissioner Cora Campbell of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

“UFA fully supports this action by our processors in making this move and believe it is in the best interest of the Alaska salmon fishery,” says Arni Thomson, President of the United Fishermen of Alaska.

Key points about the Alaska FAO-Based Responsible Fisheries Management certification:

- Verification that Alaska’s fisheries meet the most comprehensive and respected fisheries management guidelines in the world - the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and Eco-labelling of Fish and Fishery Products from Marine Capture Fisheries Guidelines.
- The certification is based on six main categories of conformance criteria:
  - The Fisheries Management System
  - Science and Stock Assessment Activities
  - The Precautionary Approach
  - Management Measures
  - Implementation, Monitoring and Control
  - Serious Impacts of the Fishery on the Ecosystem
- It is open and freely accessible to all who harvest and process Alaska seafood, not just those who pay a fee for access.
- It is a fully ISO-accredited certification. ISO is the International Organization for Standardization and is the world’s most recognized methodology for certification.
- It is less expensive than other certifications/eco-labels because there are no logo licensing fees.
- This model is in use by other high-achieving fisheries in Iceland and Canada. Fisheries like these have management governance that protects their seafood for future generations.

For more information on Alaska's sustainability efforts and the Alaska FAO-Based Responsible Fisheries Management certification program go to [www.alaskaseafood.org](http://www.alaskaseafood.org)

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