

# *Charges against Taiwanese pursued*

**by Steve Pilkington**

**Tundra Times reporter**

Acting U.S. Attorney Mark Davis said last week that he is pursuing charges against two Taiwanese fishing masters involved in a scheme to sell \$1.3 million of illegally caught salmon to U.S. buyers.

Davis said that although a complaint against the two vessel masters has been filed in U.S. District Court, he could

not comment on the case

But according to officials following the case, international red tape has muddled the process forcing the U.S. Justice Department to tread carefully.

"The Department of Justice wants to be very careful — no loose ends hanging out," said John Moseman, chief of staff for Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska.

Meng Gin Hsu and Chan Lon Lin, both Taiwanese fishing masters, are

each facing charges that they violated the Lacey Act, a federal law which prohibits dealing in illegally caught salmon. They are being held in Anchorage.

Both men were allegedly under the leadership of Patrick Lee.

Lee, who was arrested July 19 in Seattle, also has been charged with one count of violating the Lacey Act.

Lee's arrest, as well as the arrests  
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of the two fishing masters, concluded a 6-month sting operation coordinated by National Marine Fisheries Service, Coast Guard and U.S. State Department enforcement agents.

The operation began last February when, according to the U.S. Attorney's office in Anchorage, NMFS reported complaints from fishermen that the Taiwanese were offering American fish buyers North Pacific salmon caught on the high seas.

Under Taiwanese law, fishermen

from Taiwan are prohibited from catching and retaining salmon in the North Pacific.

According to Murkowski, his interest in Lee began in 1988 when Alaskan fishing industry members reported that Lee could provide ocean-run Pacific salmon.

Lee allegedly arranged to sell about 500 metric tons of Taiwanese-caught salmon to an undercover agent.

"I understand there were as many as eight fishing vessels arranged by Lee to deliver salmon to our under-

cover agents at sea," Murkowski said.

Murkowski also said that when the transfer was being made, the Taiwanese vessels had their names covered to protect their identities.

When the agents and the Taiwanese vessels met at sea, the two Taiwanese vessel masters and an interpreter boarded the NMFS chartered freighter — *Red Fin* — to make the transfer.

The agents reported receiving a number of chinook, chum, sockeye and steelhead salmon. The two vessel masters Lin and Hsu, as well as their

interpreter, Jen Tai Chu, were then arrested while on board the *Red Fin*.

When the arrests were made, several other Taiwanese fishing vessels fled and were pursued by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Morganthau*.

One of the fleeing ships, the *Sung Ching No. 1*, was boarded some 40 miles from Taiwan, and the State Department reported that a huge quantity of salmon was found on board the ship.

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