

# Stevens blasts driftnet pact

A proposed agreement between the United States and Japan over the use of high seas driftnets does not meet the requirements of the Drift-net Assessment and Monitoring Act, according to Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska.

The 1987 driftnet act requires the federal government to monitor net use, limit their size and requires them to be biodegradable as a means of controlling their use.

Stevens said, however, that the proposed agreement does not restrain driftnet use and enables foreign fishing fleets to continue intercepting Alaska salmon.

"I think the problem with the Japanese is...a total insensitivity to the environmental concerns of the rest of the world regarding the oceans," Stevens said.

"Time after time, over the past 20 years, they have ignored these

concerns," Stevens said.

Under the driftnet act, the State Department negotiates with the Japanese, Taiwanese and the South Koreans, and the secretary of commerce decides if the agreements are satisfactory.

Stevens urged the administration to negotiate with the Japanese on all ocean issues at the same time rather than seek separate agreements on salmon, bottomfish, whales and other fish and marine mammals.

The driftnet agreement opposed by Stevens would allow nine U.S. observers on the Japanese squid fleet, which is composed of more than 460 vessels.

The total number of Japanese vessels covered by observers under the agreement would total 32.

The agreement also would require a limited increase in patrol vessels.