

Gravel Eyes Modest Sized Fishing Vessels

PETERSBURG—The only way to bring about a renewal in Alaskan and American fisheries is to support the financing and equipping of modern, modest-sized fishing vessels, according to Mike Gravel, U.S. Senate candidate.

"Today the United States uses only 10% of the marine resources on its own coasts," Gravel said. "And meanwhile, many American fishermen are hard hit for earnings, while the U.S. continues to import two-thirds of the fish products used in our own country."

"I am convinced that the answer to this problem is not the concentrated financing of giant American trawlers," he said, "because these giant vessels will not originate from Alaska, hire Alaskan labor, dock at Alaskan ports or use Alaskan facilities. For all practical purposes, giant trawlers are just expeditionary vessels, whether they come to Alaska from Japan, or the United States."

Gravel proposed a national policy supporting the construction and financing of modest-sized fishing vessels. He referred to the success of 14 modest-sized Kodiak shrimpers as examples.

"These Kodiak vessels caught 43% of the total harvest just this year," Gravel said, "although they were competing against 30 foreign vessels, some of which measured twice the total tonnage of the whole Kodiak fleet. I believe this illustrates that smaller, Alaskan boats with Alaskan fishermen can do the job and do it well, if we arrange for continuous financing."

Gravel also supported Senator Bartlett's aids-to-fisheries programs, and called for a strengthening of the Fisherman's Cooperative Act.