

New law strengthens limited entry

JUNEAU--A bill designed to streamline and strengthen the state's Limited Entry Act was signed into law by Governor Bill Sheffield on Saturday, May 11.

"Although some parts of this bill are merely house-cleaning amendments, others will provide significant benefits to Alaska fishermen," Sheffield said.

The Governor was joined in Saturday's signing ceremony by Bob Blake, President of United Fishermen of Alaska, and the members of the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

Among other things, the bill will protect permits in the estate of a deceased permit holder from claims of creditors, a change Sheffield called "very important to our fishing families."

In addition, the bill protects 12 limited fisheries throughout the state and the fishermen dependent on those fisheries from potential lawsuits which could have required the Commission to redo the point system;

--enhances the Entry Commission's power to enforce the Limited Entry Act against those who defraud the state, including such third parties as permit brokers;

--and helps protect from public disclosure the economic information given the Commission by fishermen for research purposes.

"This bill will save both the state and fishermen from some potentially costly litigation, and further strengthen the Limited Entry Act," Sheffield said.