

# Stevens introduces S. 2138, National Fisheries Marketing, Promotion Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Ted Stevens has introduced legislation to the United States Senate that would create a National Fisheries Marketing Council, charged with research, education and promotion to expand markets for fish products.

"The fishing industry in the U.S. is comprised largely of small and independent companies who have found it nearly impossible to promote their products on a national basis," says Senator Stevens. "There have been several local and regional groups who have succeeded in promoting fish products on a small scale, but we need a National Council that can market seafood and influence consumer purchasing patterns on a national level."

Stevens added that medical and scientific research demonstrates that there are many health attributes to eating fish. The New England Journal of Medicine published three articles in May 1985, offering evidence that eating seafood significantly reduces the chance of coronary heart disease. Other research has shown that a diet rich in fish products protects white blood cells, which guard against disease, and promotes good vision and brain function.

The bill, S. 2138, is called the National Fisheries Marketing and Promotion Act of 1986. It has been assigned to the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, of which Senator Stevens is a member.

The bill would establish a 15-member Fisheries Marketing Council, comprised of representatives from fishing interests across the U.S. (including three representatives from Alaska). The Council will be charged with strengthening the competitive position of U.S. commercial fishing in the domestic and international marketplace, and encouraging the use of domestically-produced fish through marketing, promotion, and public relations.

"Funds for the establishment of the National Fisheries Marketing Council will come from the Fisheries Loan Fund, monies derived from foreign fishing fees paid by vessels fishing within our 200-mile territorial limits," says Senator Stevens. "This bill requests \$25 million in funds to carry out the Council's work for its first four years of existence."

Congress has authorized similar marketing and promotion programs in the past. The Egg Research and Consumer Information Act, for example, developed the slogan "The Incredible Edible Egg" to promote the purchase of eggs.

This bill is similar to legislation that Senator Stevens introduced in 1983. That bill passed the Senate at the close of the 98th Congress, but did not receive consideration in the House. Senator Stevens is optimistic that the National Fisheries Marketing and Promotion Act of 1986 will pass both houses of Congress this time.