

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

April 19, 1978

Jim H. Branson
Executive Director
North Pacific Fishery Management Council
P. O. 3136 DT
Anchorage, Alaska 99510

Dear Jim:

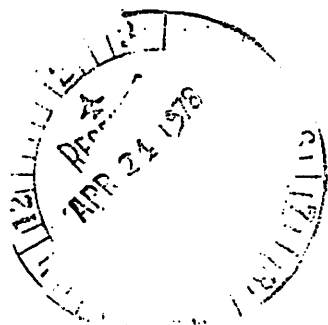
Activity on the several Aquaculture bills has picked up considerably this past week in the Senate. Hearings were held on Monday and Wednesday of this week before Senate Magnuson of the Senate Commerce Committee. Hearings were also held on Tuesday and Thursday before Senator Stone of the Senate Agriculture Committee.

The Commerce Committee considered the Leggett bill (HR 9370), the Weiker Bill (S 2582) and my bill, S 2762. The Agriculture Committee focused on the Stone bill (S2218), the Bentsen bill (S 1043), which I co-sponsored last year, and my bill, too.

I have enclosed a copy of my testimony here for your interest. It seems that the two Committees are receptive to the three proposals I have initiated. General acceptance is growing for the necessity to include (1) regional input in the National Plan, (2) rehabilitation and enhancement measures, and (3) aquaculture as a coastal activity deserving of consideration along with all other competing activities.

The next step will probably be a single bill written by the staffs of both the Commerce Committee and the Agriculture Committee working together. Hopefully this cooperative Committee print will include our proposals.

cc: Dick Neve
Council (50)



Jim H. Branson
April 19, 1978
Page 2

This should bring you in the State up to date on where the legislation stands down here. I'll keep you informed of further developments.

Sincerely,



Mike Gravel

MG/tr
Enclosure

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE GRAVEL
BEFORE THE
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
COMMITTEE

UNITED STATES SENATE

APRIL 26, 1978

FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1976

OVERSIGHT HEARINGS

MR. CHAIRMAN, MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, IT'S A PLEASURE TO BE HERE BEFORE THE COMMERCE COMMITTEE TO TESTIFY FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE WEEK ON FISHERIES MATTERS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THIS COMMITTEE, MY STATE AND THE ENTIRE NATION. THE FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT BECAME EFFECTIVE ON MARCH 1, 1977 -- A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR AGO -- AND ENOUGH TIME HAS NOW ELAPSED THAT A REVIEW OF THE ACT AT THIS TIME SEEMS ALTOGETHER APPROPRIATE.

INTRODUCTION

THE FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ACT HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE AMERICAN FISHERY RESOURCE. FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE COMMERCIAL FISHING INDUSTRY, THE 25 YEARS PRECEDING ADOPTION OF THE FCMA CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS AN ERA OF LITTLE GROWTH AND RELATIVELY MINOR CHANGE. AT THE SAME TIME THAT THE U.S. POPULATION WAS DOUBLING AND WORLD FISHING ACTIVITIES WERE ACCELERATING DRAMATICALLY, THE U.S. FISHING EFFORT REMAINED EITHER CONSTANT OR IN MANY CASES DECLINED.

IN 1956 THE U.S. WAS THE SECOND MOST PROLIFIC FISHING COUNTRY IN THE WORLD. TODAY WE RANK FIFTH.

THIS GENERATION OF NEGLECT OF AMERICAN FISHERIES HAS NOW COME TO AN END. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL FISHERY RESOURCE IS ONCE AGAIN GAINING RECOGNITION.

TO SAY THAT THE STATE OF FISHERIES IN THE UNITED STATES IS IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION WOULD CERTAINLY AMOUNT TO A GROSS UNDERSTATEMENT. SINCE THE DATE THE 200 MILE ACT BECAME LAW, FISHERY ACTIVITIES ON EVERY LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE U.S. HAVE EXPERIENCED A SURGE OF UNPRECEDENTED CHANGE.

ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, FISHERIES ARE RECEIVING MORE ATTENTION IN BOTH THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES.

ON THE REGIONAL LEVEL, THE EIGHT MANAGEMENT COUNCILS HAVE BEEN
INSTALLED AND ARE PROVING THEMSELVES RESPONSIBLE MANAGERS OF
THEIR RESPECTIVE RESOURCES. AND ON THE INDIVIDUAL LEVEL,
FISHERMEN FROM EVERY PART OF THE COUNTRY ARE SHOWING A GREATER
INTEREST IN PREVIOUSLY UNTRIED FISHERIES ACTIVITIES.

NEW FISHERIES OFF OUR COASTS ARE NOW BEING EXPLORED.
NEW MARKETS FOR AMERICAN FISH PRODUCTS ARE BEING DISCOVERED.
AND NEW FISHING BOATS ARE BEING BUILT AT A PACE UNSEEN FOR AT
LEAST A GENERATION. WE ARE TRULY IN THE MIDST OF A FISHERIES
BOOM.

FISHERIES ACTIVITY: NATIONAL LEVEL

A. EXECUTIVE BRANCH

THE NEWLY DISCOVERED IMPORTANCE OF THE AMERICAN FISHERY RESOURCE IS READILY APPARENT IN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE RECENTLY COMPLETED A REORGANIZATION AND UPGRADING OF ITS NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION. THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARY OF THIS REORGANIZATION WILL BE THE U.S. FISHERIES. THE REORGANIZATION HAS ALREADY RESULTED IN AN INCREASED BUDGET, AN ADDITION IN EMPLOYEES AND AN EXPANSION IN FISHERY PROGRAMS.

B. LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN THE NEW 200 MILE FISHERY ZONE IS ALSO INCREASING. PUBLIC LAW 95-257 WAS RECENTLY SIGNED WHICH WILL FACILITATE THE FINANCING OF FISHING VESSELS FOR PROSPECTIVE BOAT OWNERS.

IN ADDITION, AQUACULTURE LEGISLATION HAS A STRONG POSSIBILITY OF PASSAGE THIS SESSION. FIVE SEPARATE AQUACULTURE BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE PAST YEAR, ONE OF WHICH HAS ALREADY PASSED IN THE HOUSE.

THESE AQUACULTURE PROPOSALS DIRECT ATTENTION TO THE NEW

200 MILES OF "PASTURE LAND," IF YOU WILL, WHICH THE U.S. NOW MANAGES TO WHICH WE CAN SEND VARIOUS FISH SPECIES TO "GRAZE." THIS IS SIMILAR TO SENDING CATTLE TO GRAZE ON RANGELAND WHICH IS SO COMMON IN OUR NATION'S INTERIOR.

MY HOME STATE OF ALASKA HAS BEEN UTILIZING THE WATERS OF THE NORTHERN PACIFIC OCEAN TO "GRAZE" SALMON FOR ALMOST A CENTURY NOW. ESTIMATES INDICATE THAT THE CARRYING CAPACITY OF OUR 200 MILE ZONE FOR ADDITIONAL FISH POPULATIONS IS STILL FAR FROM BEING REACHED.

FISHERIES ACTIVITY: REGIONAL LEVEL

ON THE REGIONAL LEVEL, THIS PAST YEAR HAS SEEN AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF NEW ACTIVITY. EACH OF THE EIGHT MANAGEMENT COUNCILS HAS HAD THEIR START-UP PROBLEMS BUT IN OVERVIEW THE COUNCILS HAVE ORGANIZED THEMSELVES AND ADDRESSED THEIR PROBLEMS IN A THOROUGH AND THOUGHTFUL MANNER. THE LOCALIZED PERSPECTIVE THAT THE REGIONAL COUNCILS PROVIDE TO THE OVERALL PICTURE OF U.S. FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IS INDISPENSIBLE.

FISHERIES ACTIVITIES: INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

FOR THE INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS CHOSEN FISHING AS HIS WAY OF LIFE, THE PAST YEAR HAS SIGNALLED A DEPARTURE FROM THE STATUS QUO, AS WELL.

UNDER THE NEW MANAGEMENT REGIME, COLLECTION OF BIOLOGICAL DATA HAS BEEN COORDINATED TO ENSURE THAT STOCKS ARE NOT OVERFISHED AND DEPLETED AS IN YEARS GONE BY. THE NEW INTEREST IN FISHERIES HAS RESULTED IN BOAT ORDER BACKLOGS AT SHIPBUILDING FACILITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AND FISHERMEN HAVE MORE AND MORE LOOKED TO NEW FISHING AREAS AND NEW FISH SPECIES AS POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES OR SUPPLEMENTS TO TRADITIONAL FISHING ACTIVITIES.

FISHERIES ACTIVITIES: ALASKA

MY HOME STATE OF ALASKA IS CERTAINLY NO EXCEPTION TO THE RECENT FISHING BOOM. THE ALASKAN COASTLINE ACCOUNTS FOR MORE THAN 50% OF THE ENTIRE U.S. COASTLINE AND NOAA STATISTICS FOR 1976 INDICATE THAT ALASKA LEADS ALL STATES IN VALUE OF LANDINGS AT \$227 MILLION.

THE FISHERY RESOURCE IN MY STATE PROVIDES EMPLOYMENT FOR 1 OF EVERY 12 ALASKAN RESIDENTS. FISHING IS ALASKA'S MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY IN TERMS OF A RENEWABLE RESOURCE THAT WILL NOT ONLY CONTINUE TO EMPLOY THOSE PRESENTLY ENGAGED IN IT BUT

HAS THE POTENTIAL TO ACCOMMODATE MANY MORE AS NEW SPECIES ARE EXPLOITED, NEW AREAS ARE FISHED AND NEW MARKETS ARE DEVELOPED.

SEC. 2 OF THE FCMA SPECIFICALLY ENCOURAGES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOTTOM FISHERY OFF THE COAST OF ALASKA. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS UNDER WAY AND PROCEEDING WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED.

FCMA: NO CHANGES NOW

MR. CHAIRMAN, AS FAR AS MAKING SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AMENDMENTS TO THE ACT, I BELIEVE THAT SUCH SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS AT THIS TIME WOULD BE PREMATURE. THE ACT HAS BEEN IN EFFECT FOR ONLY A LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR. OF 75 TO 80 SEPARATE

MANAGEMENT PLANS WHICH HAVE TO DATE BEEN IDENTIFIED, ONLY 3
HAVE COMPLETED THE TORTUOUS MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS. IT IS
JUST TOO EARLY TO BEGIN TINKERING WITH AN ACT WHICH WE HAVE
BARELY HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE AND USE.

THERE IS, HOWEVER, ONE RELATED TOPIC I WOULD LIKE TO
ADDRESS. AS YOU KNOW, PASSAGE OF THE FCMA REQUIRED THE U.S.
TO RENEGOTIATE ALL OF THE FISHERIES TREATIES WE WERE PARTY TO
AT THAT TIME. THE INTERNATIONAL NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES CONVEN-
TION OF 1953 WAS ONE OF THESE TREATIES. THE INPFC HAD 3 MEMBER
NATIONS -- THE U.S., JAPAN AND CANADA. UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
THE INPFC SCIENTIFIC DATA WAS EXCHANGED BETWEEN THESE 3 COUNTRIES.

NOW THAT THIS TREATY IS NO LONGER IN FORCE, A NEW FORUM IS NEEDED TO EXCHANGE SCIENTIFIC DATA ON THE FISHERY RESOURCE OF THE NORTH PACIFIC. I HAVE PROPOSED THE CREATION OF A NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES SCIENTIFIC COMMISSION. IT WOULD BE A COOPERATIVE EFFORT INCLUDING THE U.S., CANADA, JAPAN, RUSSIA AND KOREA TO GATHER AND SHARE DATA ON THE NORTH PACIFIC FISHERIES RESOURCE. THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS INDICATED ITS INTEREST IN THE PROPOSAL AND THE OTHER WESTERN STATES SHOULD ALSO SEE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO RESULT FROM SUCH A SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGE. THE CONCEPT OF A COOPERATIVE MULTI-NATIONAL DATA EXCHANGE FORUM FOR FISHERIES

RESOURCES IS AN IDEA WHICH OTHER REGIONAL COUNCILS MAY ALSO FIND
USEFUL.

CONCLUSION

IN SUMMARY, MR. CHAIRMAN, I MUST CONCLUDE THAT THIS IS
AN EXCITING NEW ERA FOR THE U.S. FISHERIES IN GENERAL AND FOR
THE ALASKAN FISHERIES IN PARTICULAR. ACTIVITY IN ALL FACETS
OF AMERICAN FISHING HAS REACHED A HEIGHTENED PACE.

AFTER LITTLE MORE THAN A YEAR UNDER THE FCMA, I BELIEVE
THAT AMERICANS ARE ONLY NOW BEGINNING TO REALIZE THE FULL
SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS NEWLY ACQUIRED FISHERY ZONE.

THE FCMA HAS WORKED SURPRISINGLY WELL DURING ITS SHORT LIFETIME. IT WILL NO DOUBT NEED SOME FINE TUNING AS TIME PROGRESSES. FOR NOW, THOUGH, I BELIEVE, AS DOES THE NORTH PACIFIC COUNCIL, THAT THE ACT SHOULD NOT BE AMENDED. AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF TIME SHOULD BE ALLOWED SO THAT THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE ACT CAN BE MORE PRECISELY IDENTIFIED AND SOLUTIONS TO THOSE SHORTCOMINGS CAN BE ADEQUATELY DEvised.