

Alaska State Legislature



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Fishing Industry Data Bill Passes House **Stevens' HB 462 Would Help Fishermen, Enforcement Agencies**

(JUNEAU) – Those who catch, process or buy seafood for resale will have access to official state tallies of their activities, under legislation sponsored by Rep. Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak) and passed unanimously by the House today.

Stevens sponsored House Bill 462 at the request of many in the fishing industry who have long wanted rights to access the Commercial Operators Annual Report (COAR) they must file with the state Department of Fish and Game and the Commercial Fisheries Limited Entry Commission.

The reports document important statistical data such as how much operators catch, process or buy, the origin of the seafood and the prices paid. Current law requires the agencies to hold the information confidential – so confidential, even those submitting them cannot get copies of their own, Stevens said.

“There are many reasons why a fisherman, processor or buyer might want to get this information, or to authorize its release to a third party,” Stevens said. The Small Business Administration might want it as backup for a loan application, or the National Park Service may need it to process compensation claims from fishermen blocked from fishing in Glacier Bay National Park, he said.

[HB 462](#) would also allow the Department of Fish & Game or the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to release this information to those who submitted it, and allow its distribution to any specific third party, which would itself be bound by strict confidentiality requirements, Stevens said.

The bill also authorizes distribution of the information to federal fisheries management authorities as the National Marine Fisheries Service or the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to help bolster their efforts to monitor and manage fishing in federal waters.

“This is a common-sense bill that simply gives Alaskans in the seafood industry access to their own information, while maintaining all other reporting requirements and confidentiality protections,” Stevens said.

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