



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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For Immediate Release

UFA Names Senator Ted Stevens “Person of the Year in Alaska Politics” in wake of MSA Reauthorization.

The United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) voted unanimously to name Senator Ted Stevens as its “Person of the Year in Alaska Politics” for 2006. UFA credited Senator Stevens for the passage in Congress this week of the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, the law governing fisheries management in U.S. federal waters. UFA, representing 33 Alaska commercial fishing organizations, selects this award each year from among elected officials in Alaska government.

The waters off the coast of Alaska and the USA, from three to 200 miles, are governed by eight regional fishery management councils and regulations requiring scientific basis and public process for fishery management decisions were created in the original Magnuson Act in 1976 and last reauthorized as the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in 1996. The reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens act was widely expected to be left undone in the final weeks of congress, after the primary sponsor of the House Resources version of the bill was defeated in November’s election.

“Senator Stevens was able to shepherd a version of Magnuson-Stevens reauthorization that found support in both houses of congress, environmentalists and the fishing industry. Senator Stevens deserves credit for putting together a bipartisan compromise to make sure sustainable and science based fisheries continues. All Alaskans should be thankful and proud of Senator Stevens’ ability to bring people together to pass this important legislation...” said Arni Thomson, UFA’s National Committee chair.

Thomson added that “Bering Sea crab harvesters should be particularly pleased with the new international provisions that create a new prohibition in Section 118 on interstate and foreign commerce activities related to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in violation of any foreign law or regulation (i.e. illegal king crab fishing in the Russian EEZ). This prohibition is modeled on a provision of the Lacey Act. Title IV, International, of H.R. 5946 adds to the MSA new authority and an array of options for the Secretary of Commerce to address IUU. These new provisions will aid harvesters of other Alaskan seafood products that are affected by non-sustainable IUU harvesting

practices that result in undercutting world markets for seafood and jeopardize the livelihoods of legitimate harvesters.”

“Alaska’s regional council, the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) was identified during the passage of this Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization as the model that all other regional councils should strive to emulate. Senator Stevens deserves a great measure of credit for the success of the NPFMC. His unfailing support for and commitment to the fisheries off Alaska has led to a model management system based on strict adherence to sustainable fisheries using the best available science. Senator Stevens leadership role in passing this reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act will lead to the revitalization of all of our nations fisheries and it will ensure their viability long into the future...” said Joe Childers, Vice-President of UFA.

UFA represents 33 Alaska commercial fishing organizations from fisheries throughout Alaska and its offshore waters.

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