



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

211 Fourth Street, Suite 110
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1172
(907) 586-2820
(907) 463-2545 Fax
E-Mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org
www.ufa-fish.org

May 7, 2007

Honorable Senator Max Baucus, Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510-6200
By Fax: (202) 224-0515

Dear Senator Baucus,

United Fishermen of Alaska supports S. 552, the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Tax Treatment Act. Since the original Exxon Valdez settlement in 1994, affected Alaska fishermen have withstood major challenges in the marketplace, and are again on solid ground to continue responsibly harvesting our contribution of roughly half the nation's domestic seafood production. Alaska fishermen have had to spend their retirement funds just to stay in business. Prompt payment of the awarded damages would have made a huge difference in allowing fishing business owners to provide for their retirements. The intervening 13 years since the settlement bring the prospects of lump sum interest incurring taxes at a significantly higher rate than most fishermen would normally see. We ask that you support S. 552 to spread this tax burden over time.

- The Act allows a one time tax deferred contribution to a retirement plan, unlimited up to the amount of the award, that would allow many of those injured by the spill a chance to retire responsibly and with dignity.
- The Act provides income averaging between the year the plaintiffs receive a settlement or judgment, back to the year 1994 of the original court decision in Anchorage.
- This legislation is not a gift or a handout. Taxes will eventually be paid on any damages awarded when taken out of fishermen's retirement accounts.
- This legislation does not only benefit Alaskans – there are permit holding Alaska fishermen from every U.S. State, including 58 in your home state of Montana.

Thank you for your consideration,

Mark Vinsel
Executive Director