

Alaska State Legislature

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ASMI Salmon Marketing Bill Passes House **McGuire's HB 390 Helps Fishermen Continue, Expand Efforts**

(JUNEAU) – Alaska's fishermen will be able to continue defending and expanding their wild salmon markets at home and abroad, under legislation sponsored by Rep. Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage) and passed unanimously by the House today.

The Alaska Legislature first authorized the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) in 1993 to collect a 1 percent tax on the value of salmon at the docks, to fund the Institute's efforts to market Alaska's signature seafood products to the rest of the nation. The tax had been extended once, and McGuire's [House Bill 390](#) extends it for another five years, to 2009.

"By authorizing fishermen to continue supporting ASMI by assessing themselves this small fee, the Legislature is simply giving fishermen a critical financial tool they need to market the best seafood product in the world," McGuire said. The tax raised about \$2.5 million last year, should raise about \$2 million this year.

The explosion of Atlantic farmed salmon from Norway, Chile and other countries has posed a significant challenge to the traditional strength of Alaska's fresh, frozen and canned salmon in international markets, she said. House Bill 390 would address this challenge by authorizing ASMI to use funds from the tax to expand its efforts to international markets as well.

"ASMI stands to benefit from federal matching funds if we lift this restriction on domestic marketing and allow them to venture into the international arena," McGuire said. "One estimate shows they stand to bring in \$12 for every \$1 they collect. Those are pretty good odds, and we'd like to let ASMI take advantage of them."

McGuire saluted ASMI's outstanding track record of marketing Alaska seafood, and expressed confidence that the additional flexibility authorized by HB 390 would help the Institute repeat its domestic successes in the international arena.

"ASMI is hard at work trying to convince the rest of the United States -- and soon, the rest of world -- that they should be consuming wild salmon from Alaska, not farmed Atlantic salmon," she said. "Alaska salmon is a superior product, and it deserves the extra marketing muscle that ASMI provides."

HB 390 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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