

Sponsor Statement for SCR 12

Petition Feds to Label Farmed Salmon

Relating to federal labeling requirements for farmed salmon.

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SCR 12 requests the governor to direct the Department of Environmental Conservation to petition the United States Food and Drug Administration to adopt labeling requirements for salmon farmed using antibiotic, dyes, and other chemicals. This resolution also requests the University of Alaska to perform the research necessary to support this petition.

We have all seen the beautiful displays of farmed salmon at fish counters or restaurants without realizing that the varying shades of pink are artificially created. Almost 100% of all farmed salmon is artificially colored with either canthaxanthin or astaxanthin, a process sometimes called "color finishing" to give farmed salmon the attractive red color associated with wild salmon and salmon products that consumers expect.

Federal regulations call for declaration of the use of canthaxanthin or astaxanthin at the retail level but that information is rarely passed on to the consumer. Additionally, it is common practice to add antibiotics and other supplements to farmed finfish diets.

A national approach to labeling that identifies whether salmon is farmed using dyes, antibiotics, and other chemicals or as "wild" and free of dyes, antibiotics, and other chemicals, would help consumers make intelligent purchasing decisions.