

Admiral Watkins, commission members, thank you for allowing me to make these remarks today.

My name is Marc Jones. I am the executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. This foundation, most commonly known as AFDF, is another brainchild of Senator Ted Stevens. When the Magnuson-Stevens Act was passed the United States did not have much of an offshore fishing industry and Alaska did not have one at all. Senator Stevens recognized that there needed to be a means for developing the capabilities and infrastructure of U.S. fisheries and regional fishery development foundations were the answer. Incorporated as a private, non-profit in 1978, AFDF was chartered to assist in the accomplishment of the goals of the Magnuson-Stevens Act through working to fully develop the economic potential of sustainable Alaska Fisheries. AFDF has been working to fulfill that charter for over two decades, now. Among hundreds of other projects completed over the years AFDF built the first shore-based surimi plant in America, providing the foundation of the Pollock industry. Other projects have included building the first Alaskan freezer-longliner, developing the first salmon burger, and sponsoring the first international symposium on utilization of fish processing waste and byproducts. (We are sponsoring the second one of those here in November.)

But, I am not here to talk about past accomplishments. I am here to comment on the future. This commission is tasked with making recommendations which will underlie U.S. policy regarding fisheries and ocean issues for decades to come. I would like to highlight some subjects I hope you will keep in mind when you make those recommendations.

First, I would like to speak out against a prevalent myth. It is often assumed that Alaska's fishery resources are fully developed. I am often asked what a fisheries development organization does now that there are no new potential fisheries. The answer is that Alaska's fisheries are not fully developed. In fact, far from it. Recently Senator Stevens' office asked AFDF to make a list of stocks with commercial potential in Alaska which are either under utilized or not currently fished. In a matter of hours we came up with over forty. Many on the list like Moon Snails, will never produce major quantities of product. But others could. Gulf of Alaska Arrowtooth Flounder, Bering Sea Surf Clams and Bering Sea flatfish have the potential to develop into very large fisheries. AFDF is currently working on developing three of these stocks.

There is a common thread to every underdeveloped fishery. Development will be challenging, risky and expensive. In many cases there is inherent conflict between developing the new fishery and a currently established fishery. In other instances, insufficient information regarding the stock precludes understanding a means to utilize it.

These problems provide circumstances which are difficult but not impossible. Oceans policy must provide the freedom and support necessary to solve problems and encourage development. It must be recognized that the ocean environment changes and fisheries with it. Policy and regulation must be flexible enough to allow reaction to new situations.

Second, I hope you remember when you consider fisheries policy you are talking about the world's food supply. U.S. census bureau statistics say that the world's population currently stands at 6,234,250,387 souls as of July 1st of this year. Each of them has a plate needing to be filled every day. Twenty-five years from now that number will have grown to eight billion. That's four and one half billion more meals needed each day. One can rest assured that the owners of those plates will do whatever they can to put food on them. Increasingly the oceans will be looked to as the source for filling this ever growing need.

The recommendations you make regarding policy will have a lot to do as to whether those meals come from sustainable circumstances like Alaska's fisheries or are displaced to places far less capable of supporting a long-term view regarding habitat and conservation. It is no victory for conservation or sustainability if policy in the U.S. drives increased uncontrolled take of Patagonian Toothfish or more reef dynamiting in Southeast Asia. Responsible, on-going fisheries development must remain a goal of U.S. oceanic policy.

Thank you all for your time and consideration. I really appreciate having had the opportunity contribute to this process.

If any of you have questions or require additional information, AFDF can accessed through our website, www.afdf.org.