



Alaska Trollers Association

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Dear Senator Murkowski:

Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) is pleased to support your amendment to S. 3187, which would prohibit approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of genetically engineered (GE) fish unless the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) concurs with such approval. This amendment could go a long way towards improving and making more transparent the review process used to evaluate this first-of-its-kind engineered animal.

ATA has long supported efforts by you and the Alaska delegation, to ensure that those foods approved for public consumption are safe and wholesome for both humans and the environment. Along with many others around the country, our organization has repeatedly called for a more a more thorough, independent study of GE salmon. We have also requested mandatory labeling should GE salmon be approved, to provide a clear choice for those consumers who may have lingering concerns and want a choice. Given that this animal is revolutionary, and will be considered by many to be a 'test case' for years to come, labeling seems like a reasonable request.

FDA choose to evaluate GE salmon as it would an animal drug. Apparently, the agency considers genetically engineered salmon to be more akin to tetracycline for veterinary use than bearing any similarity to the rib-eye steak you may have had for dinner last night. As you know, that steer should have been subjected to an appropriate withdrawal timeline for the drugs it was given - what about your engineered salmon?

Analyzing GE salmon under cover of 'animal drug approval' clearly provides the means to protect the patent rights of AquaBounty and its investors, but also appears to side-step a meaningful review of this animal's safety and wholesomeness. There is also a glaring lack of decisive role for the agencies that safeguard fish and the environment. This is unacceptable.

While sound science and analysis demands an arm's length approach from social and political influence, the public has a right to both understand the outcome of relevant studies and comment on any anticipated ramifications. In our case, there could well be impacts ranging from harm to wild fish stocks, consumer confusion about the safety 'salmon', or loss of jobs for American seafood workers and economic disruption for coastal communities. Each of those impacts are important and demand consideration. At the end of the day, if the benefits outweigh any risk, then the fish will be approved.

We appreciate the efforts of you and the other amendment sponsors to provide the public better information and a voice on this critical issue of food safety and environmental integrity.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if ATA can be of assistance on this matter.

Best regards,

Dale Kelley
Executive Director