

GULF OF ALASKA COASTAL COMMUNITIES COALITION (GOAC³)

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TAA – TRADE ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE UPDATE 8/28/03

The deadline for filing PETITIONS for groups to be eligible for the Trade Adjustment Assistance program for farmers¹ is August 31st. This is NOT a deadline for individual applications.

Thanks to the efforts of Senator Lisa Murkowski, a petition for ALL Alaskan permit holders is being filed by the United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA.) If this petition is accepted, then all Alaskan permit holders will be eligible to apply for benefits. They will have up to three months to make individual applications. The GOAC3 will notify all our members as soon as we hear that the petition has been accepted.

In a Press Release of August 20, 2003, UFA issued the following information:

“United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) announced today that they intend to file a petition with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to qualify all Alaska Salmon Fishermen for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) through the USDA’s Trade Assistance for Farmers program. The petition, due August 31 to be eligible for FY 2003 funds, is the first step in the process. If the petition is certified, the second step would be for individual fishermen to apply for funds as part of the certified group. If the group is certified, Alaska salmon fishermen who can verify an overall net fishing income decline in 2002 from 2001 may be eligible, and would have three months from the date of acceptance to apply for FY 2003 assistance funds. Payments would be made beginning in January 2004.

The opportunity to petition has been granted by the USDA in response to the work of Senator Lisa Murkowski, and a concerted effort by UFA, United Salmon Association, individual Alaska fishermen and Alaska fishing organizations in a letter campaign in July. Of the 76 letters received commenting on the proposed rule, 47 respondents supported extending TAA coverage to fishermen of Alaska wild salmon, who face stiff competition from foreign farm-raised salmon.”

Alaskan fishermen wanting more information about the Trade Adjustment Assistance should check our web site for links.

¹ Alaskan fishermen were not originally included in the category of “farmers” but Sen. Lisa Murkowski has been very instrumental in working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to allow Alaskan fishermen to petition for acceptance as an eligible group.