

Maritime Lien Reform Act Would Protect Fishing Permits

Tuesday, 22 March 2011

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

For the third time in five years, Alaska's congressional delegation is introducing legislation that would protect Alaskan's fishing permits from liens. The Maritime Lien Reform Act of 2011 failed to get enough support in the House and Senate in both 2008 and 2006.

If passed would protect fishermen's livelihoods by allowing them to continue to work and pay their debts in times of financial hardship.

Bob King is an aide to Senator Mark Begich:

-- (Maritime Lien 1 34
sec "Over the years the ... problems
they may be in.")

Though permits can be bought and sold, King says they are a different kind of property than a fishing boat, for example.

-- (Maritime Lien 2 41

sec "Well, they are transferrable ... it
is transferrable.")

King says
the majority of commercial permit holders are Alaskan residents, but
about a
quarter of them live outside. He said that may give the bill leverage as
it
makes its way through Congress:

-- (Maritime Lien 3 22
sec "Well, hopefully so ... that's our
strategy.")

Congressman
Don Young called the act a win-win for fishermen, creditors and Alaska.
Senator
Lisa Murkowski described it as imperative to keep fisherman on the water
to
earn a living and pay back their creditors.

Alaska law
already protects limited entry permits from liens. The Maritime Lien
Reform Act
will protect them on a federal level.