Murkowski Pushes for NOAA Review of GE Salmon

Friday, 18 May 2012

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/120518.murkowski_on_frankenfish.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski filed an amendment on the Senate floor Thursday that would bar the Food and Drug Administration from approving genetically-modified salmon for human consumption until NOAA signs off on the plan.

Currently, approval of the genetically engineered fish would come administratively, through the FDA. Both Murkowski and Senator Mark Begich have been fighting to stop that approval unless economic, environmental and human consumption safeties are in place.

The legislation would mean the same NOAA analysis and standards in place for wild fisheries would be required before the FDA approves genetically-modified salmon.

Recently during a Health, Education, Labor and Pension subcommittee hearing, Murkowski described her intent.

-- (Murkowski 1 16 sec "The real concern is that we're ... allowing into the waters.")

Much of the opposition to the genetically modified fish is that they would not be required to be labeled as such, thereby leading to confusion among consumers who might think they are wild-caught salmon.

-- (GE Fish 2 19 sec "Right now the FDA's reluctance ... of the FDA for even that.")

Murkowski has gotten support from both sides of the aisle for her efforts, including from Democrat Jeff Merkley of Oregon:

-- (GE Fish 3 18 sec "For those of us who live in ... but also of our economy.")

Democratic Senator Tom Harkin of Iowa told Murkowski that the FDA should address some of the concerns she has, but was noncommittal as far as outright endorsement of her amendment:

-- (GE Fish 4 26 sec "Technology needs federal ... amendment we can work on.")

The Iowa senator's lukewarm reception is consistent with Murkowski's statement that she was getting significant "pushback" from farm-state interests, which increasingly rely on genetically modified crops.

###