



660 PENNSYLVANIA AVE., SE, SUITE 302, WASHINGTON, DC 20003
(202) 547-9359 • FAX (202) 547-9429
1009 GENERAL KENNEDY AVE., #2, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94129
(415) 561-2524 • FAX (415) 561-7651
WWW.CENTERFORFOODSAFETY.ORG

March 11, 2004

Senator Kim Elton
State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

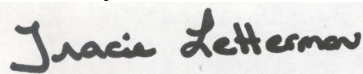
Dear Senator Elton:

The Center for Food Safety is pleased to endorse Senate Bill No. 281 and your efforts for a mandatory labeling requirement to identify genetically engineered (GE) fish and shellfish. Because GE fish are being developed for commercial use, the potential release into the environment and the use of these fish as food is imminent. Therefore, Senate Bill No. 281 would give Alaskan consumers the right-to know whether their seafood is genetically altered.

GE fish present a host of serious risks to humans and the environment. Human health effects include the potential for toxicity, allergenicity, and antibiotic resistance. As for the environmental impacts, the risk of biological contamination from GE fish is particularly acute, since GE fish may be raised in net pens from which they can easily escape and breed with native strains. The harm of such interbreeding would be severe. A Purdue University study concluded that the release of GE fish could cause the extinction of an entire fish species in a matter of a few generations. The National Academy of Sciences also issued a report warning that GE fish that escape could wreck havoc on the environment.

Despite these potentially irreversible human health and environmental risks, there is a profoundly disturbing lack of federal regulation of marine biotechnology. As such, we applaud your leadership on this issue and hope the Alaskan legislature can step into the void by ensuring that consumers are aware of genetically engineered seafood products through a mandatory labeling requirement.

Sincerely,



Tracie Letterman
Fish Program Director