

## **Congressman Don Young – Statement for the Record**

Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife  
Legislative Hearing – July 29, 2021.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify about my bills, H.R. 273, H.R. 274, and H.R. 3128 today.

We can waste no time in standing up and fighting for the health of our ocean ecosystems and fisheries.

That is why I introduced legislation in the first weeks of the 117th Congress to protect the integrity of our seafood, and fight the threat of genetically modified fish.

I introduced H.R. 273, the Prevention of Escapement of Genetically Altered Salmon in the United States Act because genetically engineered fish pose a real threat to natural salmon fisheries in this nation.

There is a major concern that genetically altered salmon could escape and breed with wild salmon changing their genetics.

This could have countless devastating impacts on the ocean ecosystem.

This bill would reduce the risks by prohibiting the shipping, transporting, offering for sale, selling, or purchasing a genetically altered finfish or a food product containing these fish.

As lawmakers, we must do everything in our power to protect the public and one of the finest products in the world.

I encourage my friends on both sides of the aisle to support H.R. 273, the Prevention of Escapement of Genetically Altered Salmon in the United States Act.

My bipartisan bill, H.R. 274, the Keep Finfish Free Act is also aimed at preventing fish from escaping and breeding with wild fish, potentially changing their genetics.

Specifically, this bill would prohibit the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce from authorizing commercial finfish aquaculture operations in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone.

I cannot stress the concern enough that these fish could escape from commercial finfish aquaculture operations and breed with wild fish, potentially changing their genetics, and causing other significant changes that could be devastating to an ocean ecosystem.

Once these fish escape into the ocean and breed with fish in the wild, the genetic makeup of wild salmon would likely be changed forever, causing countless impacts to the ocean ecosystem that are irreversible.

I urge my colleague on both sides of the aisle to support these bipartisan bills.

Lastly, I urge you to support the American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act.

This legislation would direct NOAA to establish the American Fisheries Advisory Committee with the goal of keeping fishing communities healthy and viable through local collaboration, data collection, and expanded research investments.

The American Fisheries Advisory Committee Act is a critical piece of legislation that will help protect our oceans for generations to come.

Alaska has more coastline than any other state in the nation, and our oceans play a central role in our culture, economy, and way of life.

This is not only an environmental issue, but an economic one as well.

Without healthy oceans, our seafood industry cannot succeed.

This bill is as critical for our fishermen and processors as it is for our precious ecosystems.

It is supported by the National Seafood Marketing Coalition and last Congress, this bill was favorably reported out of the Natural Resources committee by unanimous consent.

Thank you and I hope that you will all join me in supporting these bills.