



Alaska Trollers Association

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Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair Senator Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Senators Kelly and Meyer, and committee members:

The Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) supports \$196.9K in operational funding for Alaska Marine Safety Education Association (AMSEA), as recommended by Governor Parnell.

ATA represents commercial hook and line salmon fishermen who operate in both state and federal waters off the coast of Alaska from Dixon Entrance to Cape Suckling. Troll gear is deployed with either hand or power gurdies. Typically, troll vessels are small boats ranging from 16 to 60 feet and averaging about 40 feet. Average crew size is two and there are many family operations. A number of troll permit holders also fish for halibut, cod, and shellfish.

Trolling is open in federal waters outside 3 miles, which means that our fleet is subject to an ever growing list of US Coast Guard requirements. Cost to the troll fleet from these statutes and regulations is significant, particularly if training must be sought outside the community. Our fleet numbers over 2,000 permit holders, 85% of whom reside in the state. Many live in small rural towns with limited access to local safety education.

AMSEA is the only provider of marine safety training in Alaska. Consequently they provide a great service to fishermen, by sending instructors to outlying towns to help defray the cost of safety training. AMSEA works closely with fishermen to schedule classes during those times that best work for each fishing region and community.

Practical safety training by skilled instructors has been proven effective in reducing injury and death in fisheries and communities throughout the US. AMSEA is known for its well-run programs and we receive numerous reports from fishermen about instances where that training paid off for their crew when it mattered most.

In 2010 and 2012, Congress passed additional safety rules under cover of the USCG Reauthorization. We anticipate that new and expanded safety requirements and mandatory training will surface soon. Not only does AMSEA offer a range of training opportunities, they are also a great source of

information for fishermen and organizations who are attempting to sort through this ever changing maze of safety requirements.

AMSEA has a history of successful commercial and recreational safety programs and appears to use its funding wisely. AMSEA partners with a wide range of organizations across the state, from the State Trooper Academy and schools that specialize in vocational technology, to native organizations. This helps them leverage their resources and make each dollar count. AMSEA has also successfully secured grants to assist fishermen who may not have the resources to get additional safety training.

With tens of thousands of people working and recreating on Alaskan waters each year, it would make sense for the state to consider an outright investment in safety training to reduce injury, save lives. However, AMSEA is not financed by the general fund, but instead by boat registration receipts. Hence, your support of AMSEA will not take away from other important state programs.

AMSEA provides highly effective training program to people throughout the state and is working every day to keep Alaskans safe on the water. The skills learned in AMSEA classes have saved lives and helped prevent accidents. Hopefully, you will see fit to make AMSEA a permanent part of this, and future, operational budgets.

Thank you for considering ATA's point of view on this matter. Please contact me if I can provide additional information or otherwise be of assistance.

Best regards,

Dale Kelley
Executive Director