

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 28, 2013

Mr. Mike Duke
President and CEO
Walmart Stores, Inc.
702 SW 8th Street
Bentonville, AR 72716-8611

Dear Mr. Duke:

I applaud Walmart's corporate commitment to sustainability but am deeply concerned by your consideration of only sourcing seafood certified by a single broker: the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC). I strongly encourage you to consider other reliable and certified suppliers with a proven track record of fisheries sustainability such as Alaska.

Sustainable fishery management is not just in Alaska's blood, it is written into our constitution. In large part, Alaskans fought for statehood in 1959 to take control of their fisheries, ban destructive fish traps, and manage fish returns for the long run, not short-term profit. Alaskans put their trust in science to set tough standards and then live by those guidelines, even when it means catching less today to ensure healthy runs tomorrow. That ethic was continued when the Magnuson Stevens Act took control of fisheries within our 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has been guided by a scientific and statistical committee and since 1976 has never exceeded scientifically set catch levels.

The results have been impressive. Alaska now produces an average of over 150 million salmon—and over 5 billion pounds of all seafood—every year, and not one finfish stock is considered overfished. We weather the normal ups and downs in fish abundance, manage catches accordingly, and still produce over 50 percent of the nation's annual seafood landings. Alaska has been widely recognized as among the world's best-managed fisheries since well before 1997, when the Marine Stewardship Council was founded. Alaska was into sustainability before sustainability became cool.

In fact, Alaska helped make the MSC label. Alaska salmon was one of the first major fisheries to be certified by MSC in 2000 and our other fisheries followed suit: halibut, cod, pollock, and more. But concerns grew as the program evolved and goalposts shifted. Rather than certifying the state's overall salmon management strategy, MSC proposed certifying individual fisheries river by river. There were increasing costs of certification

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and logo license fees. Although founded as a carrot to reward sustainable fishery management, the blue logo seemed to turn into a stick to restrict market access.

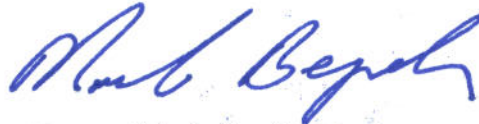
Confident in its record on sustainability, Alaska last year responded by initiating a program based on the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and eco-labeling guidelines laid out by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and independently certified by Global Trust. It is accredited by the International Organization for Standardization, which is used by other fisheries in Iceland and Canada.

When Alaska announced over a year ago it was dropping MSC certification in favor of the FAO/Global Trust program, one of MSC's founders was widely quoted as threatening that Alaska would regret its decision, a statement later repudiated. I urge Walmart to look beyond such threats. Consider who has the track record on sustainability. Alaska was one of the world's leaders on fisheries sustainability decades before MSC was even founded. We stand by our record of fishery management. We stand by our fish.

I again commend Walmart's commitment to sustainability but urge you to reconsider your proposed decision to defer to MSC as the sole arbiter of which fish you sell. I note your recent announcement contained an asterisk that allowed for consideration of equivalent standards. I submit that Alaska's history of sustainable fishery management is not just equivalent, but is the standard that first made MSC. Alaska wild salmon will compete on Walmart's fish counters not just as a sustainable product but as superior in quality, flavor, appearance, and all other respects.

Thank you for your consideration of Alaska salmon. Please contact Bob King in my office at (202)224-0319 if you have any questions regarding this. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the issue further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Begich".

Mark Begich
United States Senator