

Is Sen Murkowski's opposition to GMO salmon in public's or fishing industry's interest?

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After two decades in regulatory limbo, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved an application to sell the first genetically modified (GM) animal, the AquaAdvantage Salmon, in the U.S., but a small group of special interests including the Alaskan salmon fishing industry succeeded in lobbying Congress to impose unnecessary regulatory barriers to reduce competition in the salmon market at a cost to consumers and the environment.

You may remember the \$1.1 trillion spending bill passed by Congress in December, but you may not know it included a sneaky [provision](#) inserted by Senator [Lisa Murkowski](#) (R-Alaska), who represents the [\\$6 billion](#) Alaskan fishing industry, to block the FDA from allowing AquaAdvantage Salmon to be sold in the U.S. until it publishes labeling regulations specific to GM fish, which could take years to issue. . .

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Economists use the term "[Bootleggers and Baptists](#)" to describe how powerful interest groups throw their weight behind legislation for their narrow political or economic gain under the guise of protecting the public. . . During the 20th century, religious groups opposed the sale of alcohol but so did bootleggers who stood to reap increased profits by selling it illegally. . . .

Murkowski's pursuit of the ban on imports of AquaAdvantage Salmon allows her to assert her motivation as concern for the "health of both consumers and Alaska's fisheries" while simultaneously seeking economic rents for her constituents. The unnecessary delay of GM salmon is likely to provide years of protection from competition for the Alaskan salmon industry, straining wild salmon populations and denying consumer access to less costly, equally nutritious alternatives.

Read full, original post: [Salmon face upstream battle in Congress](#)