



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF THE
ACTING CHAIRWOMAN

August 26, 2021

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your July 21, 2021 letter regarding the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) requirements for commercial fishing vessels that operate in the Alaska region. As you know, in January, Congress passed a permanent exemption of certain GMDSS requirements in section 8336 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (2021 NDAA). I appreciate the importance of this matter and I agree with you that vessel owners would benefit from additional guidance as we work to implement new regulations.

The Federal Communications Commission and the U.S. Coast Guard determined in 2017 that fishing vessels over 300 gross tons must comply with the GMDSS requirements for Sea Area 3 or Sea Area 4. Vessels operating under an exemption or waiver were given until January 31, 2021, to comply, and that date was extended last year to January 31, 2022. I have asked Commission staff to extend the date for compliance to January 31, 2023, or one year from when the Commission implements section 8336 of the 2021 NDAA, whichever is later. I expect the staff will implement the extension as soon as possible. Further, I recognize that the law requires that we effectuate a permanent solution for the Alaskan commercial fishing fleet, and the Commission commits to working with the U.S. Coast Guard to do so.

I hope this information has been helpful. Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Rosenworcel".

Jessica Rosenworcel



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August 26, 2021

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sullivan:

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August 26, 2021

The Honorable Don Young
U.S. House of Representatives
2314 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

Thank you for your July 21, 2021 letter regarding the Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) requirements for commercial fishing vessels that operate in the Alaska region. As you know, in January, Congress passed a permanent exemption of certain GMDSS requirements in section 8336 of the William M. (Mac) Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (2021 NDAA). I appreciate the importance of this matter and I agree with you that vessel owners would benefit from additional guidance as we work to implement new regulations.

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