



Young Fishermen's Development Act

Empowering the Next Generation of Commercial Fishermen for America

Currently, there is no single federal program dedicated to training, educating and assisting the next generation of commercial fishermen. But the need is very real – daunting challenges, including high cost of entry, financial risks and limited entry-level opportunities have made it harder than ever for young men and women to start a career in commercial fishing. The bipartisan *Young Fishermen's Development Act* (H.R. 2079), introduced in the 115th Congress by Rep. Don Young (R-AK) and Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), would break down the barriers facing young fishermen, whose success is essential to the survival of America's fishing communities.



Sisters Emma Laukitis and Claire Neaton are second-generation salmon, cod and halibut fishermen from False Pass and Homer, Alaska. They grew up homesteading and fishing with their parents in Western Alaska, and now operate several fish businesses – the clothing line Salmon Sisters and Morshovi Bay Fish Company.

New generations of young fishermen are vital to the very survival of fishing communities across America.

Without them, economic opportunity, food security and a way of life deeply rooted in tradition are threatened.

Today, there are successful, but very limited, private and nonprofit efforts that work towards giving the next generation of fishermen the tools and support necessary to build strong new businesses. However, these efforts are often poorly coordinated or entirely absent in some coastal communities. The YFDA, which is based on an FCC proposal, would connect, strengthen and expand these regional efforts, building a national program to support our beginning commercial fishermen.

Key YFDA Components

- Competitive grant program for collaborative state, tribal, local or regionally based networks or partnerships
- Mentorship/apprenticeship program to connect retiring fishermen and vessel owners with new and beginning fishermen
- Support for regional training and education programs focused on sustainable and accountable fishing practices, marine stewardship and sound business practices
- Grants may not exceed a period of longer than three years, with a maximum grant amount of \$200,000/year
- \$2 million annual authorization for six years for program implementation



Linda Behnken and son Rio aboard their family's vessel, F/V Woodstock, processing halibut and rockfish. Linda has been teaching both of her sons about the rich history of the fishing industry in Alaska and the importance of continuing to fish sustainably.
Photo credit: ASMI/Joshua Roper Photography

The heritage and economies of many of our coastal communities are directly linked to our nation's fisheries. Help us ensure the next generation of commercial fishermen is well prepared to sustainably harvest America's seafood by supporting the Young Fishermen's Development Act (H.R. 2079).