



Senator Murkowski's **Improving ARCTIC Act** works to:

***Improve Access to Healthy Foods for Alaskans, by:***

- Improving the Micro-Grants for Food Security Program: To eliminate the 3% cap on eligible states' administrative costs and to allow eligible states to award subgrants via direct grants rather than through competitions. This would make administering the program easier for the Alaska Division of Agriculture and help get grants to Alaskans faster and more efficiently.
- Creating Grants and Loans for Food Distribution in Rural and Frontier Communities: To authorize grants and low-interest, long-term loans through USDA Rural Development to federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations, and other non-profit entities to enable them to create or expand food banks or food pantries in rural and frontier communities.
- Ensuring Acceptance of SNAP Benefits through Online Transactions for Certain Delivery Costs: To allow Alaskans living in rural communities unconnected by road to be able to charge their SNAP EBT cards for the cost of freight to deliver the foods they order as long as the food is not transported within the same community.
- Creating a Pilot Program to Purchase Locally Produced Food: Would allow the Agriculture Secretary to permit food banks and food pantries that participate in The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to use their TEFAP funds to purchase locally produced food to supplement USDA commodities.

***Improve Food Processing for Alaskan Producers by:***

- Providing Forgivable Loans for Small Commercial Food Producers: Provide forgivable loans to help small commercial producers and processors to create or expand food processing capacity. This will allow Alaskans to gain more affordable access to Alaskan-grown foods.

***Increase Access to Housing by:***

- Establishing the Denali Housing Fund: Establishes a Denali Housing Fund, authorized at \$5 million per fiscal year, to facilitate construction or rehabilitation of housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income families and individuals, or to provide housing for public employees.

***Strengthen Alaska's Seafood Industry by:***

- Including Country of Origin Seafood Labeling for Crab: Include "cooked crab" as a covered commodity under USDA's Country-of-Origin Labeling (COOL) Program. This provision would fix a loophole to ensure U.S. seafood is the only seafood being labeled as American.
- Expanding Eligibility of Wild-Caught Fish and Shellfish to USDA Programs: Revises the language in multiple USDA programs that provide grants or assistance to farmers and ranchers, clearly extending eligibility to commercial fishermen to ensure they have the same support opportunities available to farmers and ranchers.
- Supporting Domestic Seafood Production: Establishes a pilot grant program for domestic seafood processing in coastal communities. This provision bolsters domestic processing, strengthening Alaskan communities, food security, and seafood economy. This provision also prohibits any federal agency from regulating offshore finfish farming unless specifically authorized by Congress.
- Creating a Grant Program to Promote the Reuse, Recycling, and Sustainable Use of Marine Products from Seafood Industry: Authorizes grants to support projects to reuse, recycle, or

sustainably use chitin derived from marine animals, seaweed, marine waste from seafood, and any other seafood byproduct that would otherwise end up in a landfill or waste disposal facility.

- Extension of Credit to Businesses Providing Services to Producers or Harvesters of Aquatic Products: The Fishing Industry Credit Enhancement Act expands Farm Credit eligibility to fishing industry support services to put them on equal footing with farming and ranching. The Alaska fishing industry depends on high quality support services and expanding Farm Credit opportunities ensures Alaskan fishermen have the support they need.
- Creating a “Wild USA Seafood” Label: Establish a USDA label for wild seafood harvested in U.S. waters. This voluntary label would assure consumers that their seafood was harvested from the most sustainably managed fisheries in the world.
- Requiring a Market Name for Genetically Engineered Fish: This would inform consumers that the seafood they are purchasing has been genetically modified by requiring labeling of such seafood as “genetically engineered.”
- Requiring a Market Name for Cultivated Fish: Require a USDA label for cultured fish (also referred to as lab-grown or cultivated) to increase seafood labeling transparency to ensure consumers can make informed purchasing choices.

***Support American Forestry and Floriculture by:***

- Amending the Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program: Would expand the program to include funding for the processing and distribution of woody biomass products, including purchasing mobile biochar units. This change benefits Alaskans because it increases the ability to mitigate wildland fire prone areas by processing woody residues and small fuels into biochar for energy use – meaning fewer slash piles burned and less smoke and particulates emitted.
- Placing a Limitation on Procurement: A version of the American Grown Act, which would require The Executive Office of the President, Department of Defense, and Department of State to use their appropriated funds to purchase cut flowers and greens that are grown in the U.S. or one of the insular areas. This provision would support Alaska’s peony growers and the nation’s floriculture industry.

***Improve Tribal-Self Determination by:***

- Making permanent a pilot program that allows Tribes to administer USDA procurement of locally-grown, tribally-produced food for nutrition assistance packages that are delivered to Alaska Native communities.
- Supporting Alaska Native reindeer herders by allowing Tribes to assume meat processing inspection services on behalf of USDA.
- Ensuring USDA coordinates with Alaska Native communities when prioritizing grants for rural drinking water and wastewater projects.
- Amending the Buy Indian Act to establish first-ever requirements that USDA procure goods and service from Tribes and tribally-owned businesses.
- Expanding the authority of Tribes to enter into self-government contracts with USDA to administer certain Federal forestry and conservation programs.