



## **Alaska Fishing Industry Relief Mission Inc.**

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(FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE)

March 25, 2011

### **Alaska Fishing Industry Announces Assistance to Fishing Communities Affected by Japanese Earthquake**

The Alaska Fishing Industry Relief Mission (AFIRM) announced today that it has reactivated in the wake of the earthquake and tsunami that has devastated fishing communities in Japan, and in Northern California and Oregon.

AFIRM directors met this afternoon to reenergize and reactivate its board. AFIRM is offering its services to assist and coordinate the efforts being made by fishermen, processors, transportation and financial segments of the seafood industry from Alaska, the West Coast and their respective offshore federal waters, to provide aid to the fishing communities affected by the earthquake and tsunami.

“Japan is Alaska’s largest trading partner, with the majority consisting of Alaska seafood. In one way or another, everyone involved in any aspect of the seafood industry in Alaska and the West Coast has strong ties and relationships with Japan. Our hearts and prayers are with the Japanese people as they seek to recover from this terrible tragedy, and we will look for guidance from them on best to use the resources we raise to assist their fishing communities,” said Larry Cotter, AFIRM’s Chair.

“AFIRM directors and others returned this week from the Boston Seafood show, where discussions centered on our partnership with Japan and what we could do to help. Many have already contributed and many more are eager to help when the situation allows for a good assessment as to what help is needed most,” said AFIRM director Terry Shaff, President of Unisea, Inc, and chairman of the Pacific Seafood Processors Association.

“We are also aware of damage suffered by fishing communities in Brookings, Crescent City, Fort Bragg and other Oregon and California North Coast communities, and we intend to apply some of our efforts to help their communities as well,” said AFIRM Secretary-Treasurer Mark Vinsel.

AFIRM, a 501(c)(3) non-profit charity, was first formed to assist the Gulf fishing communities following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005. The group coordinated the donation of a Marine Travellift to refloat thousands of vessels grounded far inshore by the hurricanes, as well as providing for an ice-making facility.

Although AFIRM has its roots in the Alaska and West Coast seafood industry, we will willingly accept donations from any part of the country, and from outside the seafood industry.

Please consider these important points when considering directing your charitable donation to AFIRM:

- AFIRM has zero overhead given its volunteer board, so 100% of all contributions go directly for assistance.
- AFIRM has the ability and interest to expend donations directly and specifically to those fishing communities most severely impacted.

Our website specific to this topic will be online by Monday, March 28, and will be located at [www.akjapanhelp.org](http://www.akjapanhelp.org). We will be able to accept donations via check immediately, and by Credit Card and Paypal in the near future.

Our address is: 211 4<sup>th</sup> St., Suite 110, Juneau, Alaska 99801. Our phone number is 907-586-2820.

For more information contact:

Larry Cotter, Chairman at 907-723-1920

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