



Clean water is arguably what makes Alaska strong, supporting abundant fisheries and the livelihoods and lifestyles of thousands across the state. To ensure this vital resource remains healthy for generations to come, we are working to raise Alaska's Water Quality Standards via processes set out in the Clean Water Act.

Under the Clean Water Act, states have the mandate to protect the “chemical, physical, and biological integrity” of water by preventing pollution. This means ensuring that our waters remain swimmable, drinkable, and fishable for all people, especially the most vulnerable among us, for generations to come.

In Alaska, the reasons to keep our clean waters clean are many:

- Clean water supports a multibillion dollar commercial seafood industry at the heart of Alaska's economy.
- In Alaska's many rural communities, up to 80% of an individual's diet may come from the aquatic harvesting of traditional subsistence foods.
- Clean water allows us to eat as much healthy Alaska seafood as we want, without having to worry about the fish consumption advisories that plague other states.



So what's the problem?

Alaska water remains arguably the cleanest in the nation, but the current Water Quality Standards leave our waters vulnerable to pollution. The AK Department of Environmental Conservation needs to act now to protect Alaska's clean water and world-class fisheries and ensure that adequate Water Quality Standards, healthy seafood, and vibrant communities define Alaska for generations to come.



Photo credit ADEC



6.5 grams

54 grams

157 grams

250 grams

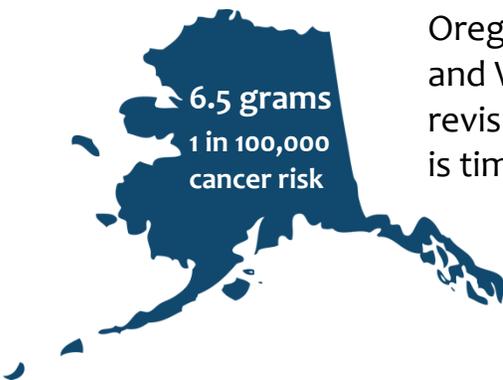
Why is the 6.5 grams number so important? Because this is the amount of seafood the state of Alaska assumes we eat per day, and 6.5 grams is about the size of a small strawberry.

Why does that matter? Because the Clean Water Act sets out a formula that helps protect human health by limiting the levels of bioaccumulative toxins that can be dumped into fresh and near shore waters, and **a key factor in that formula is how much fish and seafood a state's residents eat**, otherwise known as the **Fish Consumption Rate** (FCR, also called the Fish Consumption Value, or FCV). Alaska's current FCR is based on a severely underestimated idea of how much seafood Alaskans eat. By not bringing this number in line with reality, the state is missing an opportunity to protect our clean water.

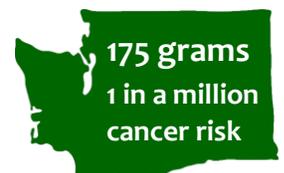


The other major factor in determining a State's Water Quality Standards is something called the **Acceptable Cancer Risk**. In Alaska, policy makers have decided that 1 incidence of cancer in 100,000 individuals is acceptable. In contrast, most other states use a more protective rate of 1 in a million, **meaning Alaska accepts 10x more incidences of cancer as "acceptable."**

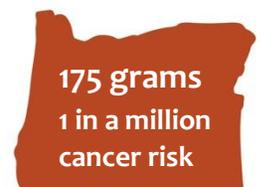
As a state whose economy, culture, and way of life depend on clean water and healthy seafood, we deserve better standards.



Oregon recently updated its FCR to 175 grams and Washington is currently in the process of revising to those same protective standards. It is time for Alaska to do the same.



Numerous studies show a more accurate FCR for Alaska to be not 6.5 grams, but rather **240 grams** per person per day.



What does working towards a solution look like?

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation needs to increase the Fish Consumption Rate and decrease the Acceptable Cancer Risk. If the state fails to act, the EPA needs to use the authority granted it under the Clean Water Act to issue more reasonable standards for the Alaskan people. We need to let our officials know that We Eat Fish! Sign the petition and learn more at www.insidepassagewaterkeeper.org/weeatfish.



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