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Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute Announces New Third-Party Certification Assessment Process For Industry

Juneau, Alaska. March 3, 2010 – The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) Board of Directors announced today that Global Trust Certification Ltd. has been chosen to perform an independent, third-party certification of Alaska’s fisheries management systems.

Under the agreed model, each major Alaska fishery will be assessed for conformance to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and the FAO Guidelines for Ecolabelling Fishery Products. The substantive requirements of the FAO Codes are the world’s most widely recognized sustainability principles.

“For over 50 years Alaska has been the leader in sustainable fisheries management,” said Ray Riutta, Executive Director of ASMI. *“Now, as a service to the entire Alaska seafood industry, we expect to be able to offer a robust certification, for those markets where third-party certification is required or desirable.”*

Because it’s being provided through ASMI, there will be no logo-licensing fees, which means certification will be free to all Alaska customers. Global Trust certification will not obscure the Alaska origin, but rather enhance it as a leading source of sustainable seafood. This critical component is in line with ASMI’s stated mission of increasing the value of Alaska Seafood.

“Maintaining the Alaska connection is key for us,” said Riutta.

ASMI invited certifiers to submit competitive bids for third-party certification through an open Request For Proposals process, and selected Global Trust because of their extensive experience in certifying other best-practice fisheries around the world.

Iceland has already begun an assessment process through Global Trust. With the addition of Alaska, now two of the world's leading sustainable fisheries are taking a new approach of certifying their management structure directly against the FAO Codes.

“This is not a new standard,” said Peter Marshall, founder and CEO of Global Trust. “The FAO Codes are recognized and respected. GT offers a refreshed, high-integrity certification process backed by accreditation, which is of interest to ‘best in class’ fisheries. Both Alaska and Iceland are recognized as world models of best fisheries management practices. We are extremely honored to bring Alaska on board.”

Alaska intends to certify the management structure of its major commercial fisheries; salmon, shellfish, groundfish and halibut and black cod. The first fishery certification is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

Global Trust Certification is an internationally recognized and accredited certification body with operational projects in over 15 countries. Global Trust Certification leads the world in seafood standards development, certification and facilitation. The Ireland-based company was founded in 1998 by the current CEO, Mr. Peter Marshall, to service the needs of industry and to bridge confidence through certification. For more information visit www.gtcert.com.

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) works in the U.S. and key overseas markets promoting Alaska Seafood and offering seafood industry education. For more information about Alaska Seafood, please visit www.alaskaseafood.org.