

US senator ready to try speed tactic again to advance bill to block China-processed Russian seafood

'I have been having a tough time getting this over the goal line. We've been working this nonstop' -- US senator Dan Sullivan

By [Undercurrent News](#) | Dec. 19, 2023 15:18 GMT



□ Alaska senator Dan Sullivan pleading for support in his effort to ban Russian seafood. Image is still from C-SPAN 2 broadcast.

US senator Dan Sullivan says he will try again to use "unanimous consent" to speed a bill he earlier introduced through the upper chamber if he is not successful in convincing the president Joe Biden administration to expand its ban on Russian seafood to include seafood harvested in Russia and processed in other countries, including especially China.

The comments were reported by the [Alaska Daily News](#) on Monday (Dec. 18).

[Undercurrent News](#) reported how Sullivan, an Alaska Republican, attempted, in June, to use the tactic of asking for an immediate unanimous vote on the Senate floor to pass the US-Russian Federation Seafood Reciprocity Act of 2023, S. 2011. The effort failed, however, as senator Ed Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat, stood to raise objections over concerns about how the legislation might impact seafood processors, including Gorton's Seafood, in his home state.

Seven months after it was introduced, Sullivan's bill still has only one co-sponsor: fellow Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski.

Biden, in March 2022, passed an executive order that blocks the US import of Russian seafood. However, a loophole that changes the country-of-origin when an item is processed in another country has allowed a considerable amount of Russian seafood to continue entering the US. Sullivan reportedly told *ADN* that he has been trying for months to work with the US Department of Treasury to change that, but not having any luck so far.



□ Credit: Toshe Ognjanov/Shutterstock.com

"I have been having a tough time getting this over the goal line. We've been working this nonstop," Sullivan reportedly told *ADN* in an interview. "Stay tuned."

As noted in the *ADN* article, the effort to expand the ban to include Russian seafood processed in China has gained some momentum from an investigative series published by the Outlaw Ocean Project, Oct. 9, in [The New Yorker](#). The series provided haunting details about crew members being held captive, beaten and suffering from malnutrition aboard vessels in China's distant water fishing fleet, as well as a thorough accounting of the Chinese program used to enlist and transport a large number of Uyghurs over 1,000 miles from Xinjiang, in the land-locked, northwestern part of China, to seafood processing plants in Shangdong, on the east coast.

The Outlaw Ocean Project investigation bolsters the case for keeping Russian seafood that moves through Chinese processors out of the United States, said Sullivan.

"There's a moral issue to this," he is quoted as saying.

Since the summer, Markey has had "productive conversations" with Sullivan as well as senator Lisa Murkowski, another Alaska Republican, about the prospect of legislation, and, the Massachusetts lawmaker reportedly said in a statement sent to *ADN*. Markey said he supports an ethical sustainable seafood supply.

The ban was supposed to strike an economic blow against Russia in the aftermath of the Ukraine invasion. That can't happen without cracking down on the Chinese processing of Russian-caught fish, Sullivan reportedly said.

"It's driven by an authoritarian regime that is slaughtering people in Ukraine. And we want them to pay," Sullivan said.

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