



DEC News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nautilus Foods Fined for Violating Alaska's Seafood Processing Laws

November 26, 2003—Valdez--A Valdez seafood processing company was sentenced November 18th to pay \$8,000 in fines after being convicted of violating the state's seafood processing laws, the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) announced today. Tom Waterer admitted that his company, Waterkist Corporation (doing business as Nautilus Foods) had processed seafood without the Department's approval. The company was placed on probation for one year from the day of sentence.

The investigation began when the Valdez Star ran a story on a Nautilus Foods' local salmon smoking operation. DEC officials confirmed that Waterer had no permit, had not submitted plans for the operation, and an inspection disclosed processing violations. Waterer offered several explanations for the violation; however, Valdez District Court Judge Joel Bolger found the explanations "disingenuous" and imposed the fine to deter other seafood processors who might be tempted to break the law.

"It's important to enforce seafood regulations," said Assistant Attorney General Kevin Burke, the prosecutor in the case. "The regulations are there, not only to protect the public's health, but also the reputation of Alaska seafood."

DEC's Environmental Health Director Kristin Ryan agreed, saying, "The permitting process establishes a level playing field that ensures all seafood processors comply with the requirements to provide safe, high quality seafood to the consumer. An operator that violates this requirement may compromise the safety and quality of the seafood they process. One unsafe or poor quality seafood product can have a devastating impact on the entire Alaska seafood industry."

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For copies of the original charging documents, contact paralegal Cynthia Bradford at 269-6250.

