

Maine senators join fisheries bill

By [Bart Jansen](#) Washington D.C. Correspondent May 04, 2007 02:43 PM

WASHINGTON — Sens. Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins joined bipartisan legislation to ban fisheries subsidies worldwide, in an effort to discourage overfishing.

The Maine Republicans were among 13 senators who introduced a resolution Thursday night calling for the United States to pursue an international ban on government subsidies to the fishing.

Earlier this week, Peter Allgeier, the U.S. Ambassador to the World Trade Organization, proposed a broad prohibition against fisheries subsidies at WTO negotiations in Geneva including delegates representing the WTO's 150-member countries.

Worldwide fisheries subsidies are estimated at \$30 to \$34 billion annually – levels equal to approximately 25 percent of world fishing revenue, according to the advocacy group Oceana.

At least \$20 billion are "harmful" subsidies that drive increased and intensified fishing by providing support for boat construction and modernization, fishing equipment and fuel and other operational costs, according to the group.

The largest overall fishing subsidizers are Japan's \$5.3 billion, the European Union's \$3.3 billion and China's \$3.1 billion, according to the group.

"The world's fisheries are near total collapse, yet many governments continue to sponsor overfishing with the billions of dollars in subsidies they dole out to the fishing sector," said Courtney Sakai, campaign director at Oceana. "To end overfishing, follow the money that supports it and make the money stop."