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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### Grand Jury Indicts Homer Woman in Fishermen's Fund Case

JUNEAU, Alaska—A Kenai grand jury indicted a Homer woman Monday on charges that she altered a crewmember license to get Alaska Fishermen's Fund benefits.

Sara L. Brooks, 26, has been charged with forgery, theft and unsworn falsification. In July, Brooks reported an injury to the Alaska Fishermen's Fund requesting about \$1,500 in medical bills be paid for an injury she claimed to have sustained while commercial fishing in Alaska.

An investigation revealed that Brooks did not possess a valid Alaska commercial fishing crewmember license at the time of injury and that she submitted what appears to be an altered crewmember license to the Alaska Fishermen's Fund seeking benefits.

An arraignment on the charges is scheduled for April 6. A grand jury indictment is only an accusation and a defendant is presumed innocent.

The theft, a class B misdemeanor, is punishable by up to 90 days in jail and a \$2,000 fine. The unsworn falsification, a class A misdemeanor, is punishable by up to a year in prison and a \$10,000 fine. The forgery, a class C felony, is punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$50,000 fine.

The Alaska Legislature established the Fishermen's Fund in 1951 to provide medical benefits to licensed commercial fishermen who are injured on the job in Alaska. The funds come from a percentage of the revenue from the sale of crewmember fishing licenses and permits.

To qualify for benefits, an injury must be directly related to commercial fishing. A claimant must have a valid crewmember license at the time of injury and the injury must occur in Alaska or Alaska waters.

The commissioner of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development oversees the administration of the program with the assistance of the Fishermen's Fund Advisory and Appeals Council.

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Alaska Fishermen's Fund  
<http://labor.alaska.gov/wc/ffund.htm>