



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 19, 2012

Representative Paul Seaton, Co-Chair
Representative Eric Feige, Co-Chair
House Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
120 4th St, State Capitol, Room 3
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Support for HB 365 Regarding Marine Invasive Species

Dear Co-Chairmen Seaton & Feige, and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the largest statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 37 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore federal waters. UFA member groups have long been concerned with the number of marine invasive species that have been identified in Alaska or have the potential to be introduced here. If rapid response capabilities are not established in advance, or if invasives and their transporting vectors are not identified at early stages, they pose potentially devastating effect on the state's fishery resources and the livelihoods of fishing fleets.

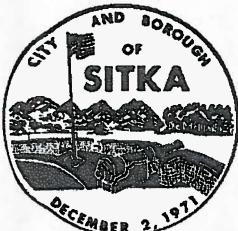
UFA commends the committee for drawing attention to this issue through sponsorship of HB 365, and we recommend support in the legislature. Thank you for your attention to this issue, and your support of HB 365.

Sincerely,

Mark Vinsel
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Crab Coalition • Alaska Independent Fishermen's Marketing Association
Alaska Independent Tendersmen's Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association • Alaska Trollers Association
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Aleutian Pribilof Islands Community Development Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Reserve • Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association • Cape Barnabas Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United • Crab Group of Independent Harvesters • Douglas Island Pink and Chum
Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association
Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation
Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance
Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners
Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Cook Inlet Drift Association
United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association



City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835

March 29, 2012

Rep. Bill Thomas, Co-Chair
Rep. Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee

Dear Co-Chairs Thomas and Stoltze and Finance Committee:

City and Borough of Sitka strongly supports House Bill 365, "An Act relating to the rapid response to, and control of, aquatic invasive species" and requests that HB 365 be heard and expedited for approval this Session by the Alaska State Legislature. This legislation is needed now to encourage a high priority response to eradicate dangerous invasive species before irreparable harm is done to Alaska's marine environment.

In the almost two years since the invasive tunicate *Didemnum Vexillum* was identified in Sitka's Whiting Harbor, the first known site in Alaska, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has done dive surveys showing the spread of the tunicate and developed a draft response plan and hopefully this summer will hire an expert environmental firm to contain and eradicate this invasive with the \$500,000 in the Governor's Budget.

This tunicate has caused major habitat losses world wide, with hundreds of miles of fishing grounds on the East Coast closed to fishing. Sitka's rich fishing grounds and prime herring habitat, Sitka's harbors, and other Alaska waters, are at risk. HB 365 provides for a "Rapid response to, and control of, aquatic invasive species." This is exactly what CBS has asked the ADF&G to implement. The most important part of HB 365 is the direction to State agencies to not just develop response plans but implement actual containment and eradication, especially for those invasive species which could devastate Alaska's fisheries. This priority action requires a coordinated immediate response by all applicable State and Federal agencies.

Thank you for your support for affected communities including Sitka to prevent the spread of invasive species along Alaska's vast high-value coast.

Sincerely

Jim Dinley
Jim Dinley
Municipal Administrator

cc: Rep. Paul Seaton and Rep. Eric Feige, Co-Chairs, House Resources Committee
Rep. Peggy Wilson and Senator Bert Stedman

Providing for today...preparing for tomorrow

Linda Hay

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 4:05 PM
To: Linda Hay
Subject: FW: HB 365

-----Original Message-----

From: housemajority_email@housemajority.org [mailto:housemajority_email@housemajority.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 3:50 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: HB 365

+-----+
DO NOT REPLY DIRECTLY TO THIS EMAIL: your reply will go to enews@housemajority.org To correspond with the author Hit 'Reply' or 'Forward'.
Then change the TO: address to gagraziano@alaska.edu If suspected Spam please forward to: support@housemajority.org
+-----+

From: gagraziano@alaska.edu

I had the opportunity to listen in to the HB 365 hearing Monday, and was impressed with the comments and knowledge on invasive species issues in Alaska. Particularly as they pertained to needs for legislation and actions that encompass more than marine species, and mentioning the importance of rapid response funds like Montana's.

From what I have heard thus far it appears that HB 365 will direct Fish and Game to increase the priority of rapid response to identified marine invasive species, specifically with rapid response planning. The Department of Fish and Game has done a fair amount of planning already in cooperation with multiple agencies. Specifically for aquatic and marine species they have an established Aquatic Nuisance Species management plan, Spartina prevention and response plan, a green crab plan, and a plan for *Didemnum vexillum*. These are in addition to the broad Invasive Weeds and Pests management plan which the Division of Agriculture completed. An obvious next step to all these plans is implementation.

Several states have established invasive species councils that coordinate rapid response planning and implementation amongst agencies and stakeholders. Some of the core aspects of invasive species councils are represented in HB 365 through the provisions for response planning and implementation. The Fish and Game and Natural Resources Departments already have authority to plan for and implement actions related to invasive species. HB 365 essentially tells the Fish and Game Department that they must increase the priority of planning and response for new invasive species, however is limited to marine invasive species.

Established invasive species councils in other states efficiently coordinate planning and management actions amongst all involved agencies and stakeholders in a defined manner. States with effective programs, include implementation funds similar to Montana's rapid response fund. An invasive species council was proposed by Representative Craig Johnson in previous legislative sessions. Examining fiscal notes associated with invasive species council bills could help determine if more than marine response planning is possible with a similar amount of funding.

--
Gina Graziano

Invasive Plants Instructor

UAF Cooperative Extension Service

907-786-6315

gagraziano@alaska.edu

~ Gino Graziano

Zip Code: 99501

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Then change the TO: address to gagraziano@alaska.edu If suspected Spam please forward to: support@housemajority.org

Louie Flora

From: Rep. Paul Seaton
Subject: FW: HB 365 is needed to address Alaska's aquatic invasive species

From: Tim Stallard [mailto:weeds.free.ak@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 11:08 AM

To: Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Alan Dick; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Berta Gardner; Rep. Scott Kawasaki

Subject: HB 365 is needed to address Alaska's aquatic invasive species

Hello members of the House Resources Committee,

Thank you for proposing and considering HB 365 - "An Act relating to the rapid response to, and control of, aquatic invasive species." I hope you will support this measure.

Alaska's environment and the natural resources upon which we depend for jobs, development, tourism, and quality of life are under threat by the rapid spread of damaging invasive species. Despite our isolation and extreme climate these aggressive alien species are skilled at hitch-hiking on cargo ships, fishing and pleasure boats, float planes, heavy equipment, vehicle tires, commodities (gravel, straw, mulch, soil), etc.

As you are likely aware, invasive species cause many billions of dollars of damage each year in the lower 48 and we are just beginning to see these impacts in Alaska. The best solution is to prevent the arrival of new species in the first place with invasive species-free commodities and good "hygiene" - For example wash the boat, plane, equipment, etc. free of any weed seeds or invasive species prior to arrival in a clean part of Alaska. While we need to do more to prevent the spread of invasive species, it is still inevitable that a few will sneak in. Thus it is essential that we have the ability to detect these alien invaders as early as possible and respond as quickly as possible. This is known as Early Detection/ Rapid Response (EDRR).

I know its politically easier to act after everyone recognizes a major problem, but the sooner we can detect and eradicate or control the most damaging species the better - this will save us a tremendous amount of money and heartache in the long run.

A specific example of a fresh water aquatic invasive species is Elodea (water weed) which is currently known in the Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Cordova areas. This plant is easily spread by small fragments. It has the ability to choke up lakes and slow moving water and degrade salmon spawning habitat. It was recently discovered in Anchorage's Sand Lake - which is used by float planes. We are very concerned that without action, it will soon spread to Lake Hood and from there throughout southcentral and southwest Alaska. USFWS biologists estimate it will cost about \$210,000 to plan for and apply aquatic herbicide to Sand Lake - but we believe we can eradicate the plant from this lake with a three year effort. Note that herbicides are a last resort, but in the case of this aggressive weed, herbicides represent a much lower ecological cost than allowing Elodea to take over and spread.

I read through the text of HB 365 and this proposed bill appears to me to perfectly address the need for ADF&G to develop an EDRR plan and act in coordination with other state, federal, local, and private entities. Of course such efforts require funding to be successful, but I understand that needs to be addressed separately in a different process.

I don't see any changes that need to be made to this proposed legislation, except that there may be a comma out

of place or word order issue in Sec. 16.05.093 (c) that begins on line 5 of page two of the bill. I believe in the intent of this sentence, but it doesn't make sense to me the way it is written. Also, perhaps something could/should be added to this bill to address the issue of prevention?

the risk of asking for too much, we need a similar comprehensive statewide effort to deal with the rapid invasion of terrestrial invasive plants. DNR has an excellent Invasive Species Coordinator, but more resources are needed to address damaging invasive land plants. Perhaps most importantly, Alaska DOT needs to take an active role in preventing the spread of invasive weeds and controlling the many weeds along state Rights of Way, airports, snow dumps and gravel pits.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Thank you,

Tim Stallard
Invasive Plant Program Coordinator
Anchorage Park Foundation

(907) 347-2214

Keeping Weeds OUT of the Picture

Louie Flora

Subject: FW: can you also add this to the committee packet?
Attachments: Hydrilla_response_upstate_NY.pdf; comparison_hydrilla_elodea_egeria.jpg; Aquatic_weed_control_TLW_presentation_2_1_11_compressed.pptx; Conceptual Amendment HB 365.docx

From: Wurtz, Tricia -FS [mailto:twurtz@fs.fed.us]
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2012 10:45 AM
To: Louie Flora
Subject: FW: True rapid response to Hydrilla in upstate NY

From: Wurtz, Tricia -FS
Sent: Wednesday, February 29, 2012 8:39 AM
To: cnipl-l@lists.uaf.edu
Cc: cecil_rich@fws.gov
Subject: True rapid response to Hydrilla in upstate NY

Hi CNIPM,

I was travelling in upstate NY last week when I read the attached article in a newspaper. A 65-acre infestation of *Hydrilla* was found in Cayuga Lake (one of the Finger Lakes) in August, and it was treated with Aquathol herbicide in October. Not only that, but a task force has formed that already has appealed to the NY State Legislature for \$1 million in funding to try to kill off the infestation completely. *Hydrilla* is a close relative of *Elodea* (see attached comparison).

This impresses me because these people seem to understand the need for a truly rapid response. I wish we Alaskans could act as quickly.

Trish

Trish Wurtz
Coordinator of FHP Invasive Plants / R10 Pesticides / and R10 Forest Health Monitoring Programs
USDA Forest Service, Forest Health Protection
3700 Airport Way, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709
907-451-2799
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<http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r10/fhp>

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"The cost burden and the coordination burden really is overwhelming for any single municipality or even county," she said.

If left untreated, hydrilla could damage the local economy. The revenue made off the lake could disappear because the water could become solid hydrilla, she said. Locals would have to pay to keep the channels open while the tourism profits drop and the real estate value of the area declines.

If the state refuses to provide assistance, she said, the task force will look elsewhere for funding, like grants that would help cover the removal as the herbicide required to kill the tubers is costly.

"The cost is high per acre period, with whichever direction you choose to go," Johnston said. "We have quite a few number of acres we have to treat. We're looking at a maximum of 66 acres."

Johnston said there are before and after tests to ensure the herbicide will cause no unwanted side effects in the water. Also, money must be allocated to raise public awareness concerning the project.

While it is speculated that it will take five years to fully eliminate the hydrilla, Johnston said, the process could take up to seven years.

Dave Adams, regulatory coordinator of the Department of Environmental Conservation, said the herbicide treatment in October was successful even though it did not entirely eradicate the plant's infestation.

"With treatment and monitoring, we can remove the overall vegetation's density and extent, but it will take a couple of years," Adams said.

2/23/2012

THE ITHACAN 3

Ithaca requests up to \$1 million to kill Hydrilla

BY TINA CRAVEN
STAFF WRITER

To fund the eradication of hydrilla *verticillata*, an invasive aquatic species that first appeared in the Cayuga Inlet last fall, a local environmental task force has requested \$700,000 to \$1 million in funding. Hydrilla could take up to seven years, Johnston said.



JOHNSTON said the removal of hydrilla could take up to seven years. York state.

First spotted in August, hydrilla creates toxic blue algae harmful to local wildlife. In October, the Cayuga Inlet Hydrilla Task Force and Allied Biological, a lake management consulting company based in the Northeast, administered Herbicide Aquathol X to prevent the plant from spreading.

The hydrilla is currently dormant, and Sharon Anderson, environmental program leader for the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County, said the mild winter has done very little to impact the plant's growth. The invasion is expected to be worse, she said, because there was not a harsh winter to kill the hydrilla's exposed tubers.

Roxy Johnston, watershed coordinator for the City of Ithaca's Water Treatment Plant, said the task force asked the state for funds Jan. 31, but members are still awaiting a response. Johnston said she is hopeful the state will contribute some money to the project.



House Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Trout Unlimited supports HB 365

Dear Representatives Seaton and Fiege,

Trout Unlimited ("TU") is a national nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the protection of coldwater fisheries and their habitats. Through our offices in Juneau, Anchorage and Dillingham and in conjunction with over 800 members and volunteers throughout the state, we have long participated in efforts to protect the valuable and still intact coldwater fishery resources in Alaska.

We have also long been concerned with the toll aquatic invasive species have taken on fish stocks in other parts of the country and around the world. As demonstrated time and again they can, in a short amount of time, threaten both sport and commercial fisheries and take a significant ecological and economic toll on our states resources.

We are writing to you in support of HB 365, authorizing the Department of Fish and Game to take measures to combat invasive aquatic species in a timely and appropriate fashion. Our commercial and sport fishing, as well as our mariculture industries, are too valuable to put at risk by delaying immediate action when it comes to marine aquatic invasive species.

Thank you very much for your time on this extremely important matter.

Sincerely,

Tim Bristol/Alaska Program Director