

Matt Gruening

From: Ken Fate
Sent: Wednesday, April 11, 2018 4:38 PM
To: Rep. Louise Stutes
Cc: Matt Gruening
Subject: Public testimony from Sitka for HB199

Dear Representative Stutes,

Please accept, and distribute to the House Fisheries Committee, this public testimony from two individuals below for HB199 as submitted to the Sitka Legislative Information Office.

Thank you.

HB 199 Wild Salmon Legacy Act: Dear Committee members, I very strongly support this bill's update of Title 16, which hasn't been updated since Statehood. Much has changed since then. Wild salmon runs are fundamental to the lives of Alaskans culture, a major food source, economy and identity. This bill insures that Alaskans have a greater voice in major permitting decisions that impact wild salmon streams. The update would ensure responsible development with enforceable standard while providing public input and expansion of Fish and Game's authority to protect fish habitat.

Thank you for taking my comments.

Sincerely,

Libby Stortz,

Sitka, Alaska

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on H199.

Sitka is being hit hard this spring with almost no herring spawning and salmon fishing closed. Both of these events impact my life. I eat herring eggs and depend upon salmon as an important part of my diet. We know that the environment is changing rapidly so, really, doesn't it just make sense to manage our fisheries very conservatively? Managing our fisheries also includes managing the environments that they depend upon. Without that piece, we will not sustain our fish populations. I am glad that the legislature sees a need to address this problem. The situation for me, specifically, and for Sitkans speaks loudly to this need. Thank you opening this discussion.

However, H199 does not go far enough in protecting our lifestyle and the economy of SE Alaska. I will speak here only to the measures that need to be added to the legislation, not the good elements you already have.

We need enforceable rules that protect the sustainability of our fisheries; all the jobs that depend upon the health of our fish. Those rules need to address water quality, address maintaining fish

passage to spawning grounds and returning to the sea, healthy flow levels of streams, and healthy lands that contribute to a healthy habitat for fish rearing. These are missing from H199 at this time. Another need for enforcement needs to be giving ADF&G the power to protect fish habitat as well as permitting authority over all bodies of water in the state. Currently, they have jurisdiction for permitting in less than 50% of salmon streams in the state. They need to be able to manage the waters of the state.

Very importantly, the law must require development projects to create no adverse impacts on fish or their habitat before any permit is issued. Companies need to show us that they can work within our requirements prior to permitting. Salmon are fundamental to the economy and lifestyle of SE Alaska. We cannot afford to have any sloppy development in a changing climate. Companies wanting access to our resources already have access to effective technology that can help them be responsible developers, helping Alaska grow a sustainable economy, so why not hold them to the high standards they are capable of meeting? Having strong enforceable regulations is the only way to achieve this. It is a way that any company we want to operate in our state will want to comply with. It also is a way to weed out any company that might want to cut corners and, though we might get a revenue boost in the short term, we lose in the long term more than we gained in that short term. Managing our resources conservatively is absolutely essential in this time of rapid climate change.

If you can incorporate these requirements into H199, I can support it, but without them, the bill is too weak and vague to be effective enough to protect our fish dependent lifestyle and economy and the future health of our state.

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