

No on 52

-Michael Kennedy

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The State of Alaska needs to abide by the Court decision that State Parks cannot have long term leases.

The Alaska Constitution says Alaska lands and water be managed for the maximum benefit of its people.

Public land is protected for it to remain public land.

The hatchery has been financially failing for years. Giving it public land will not change that.

I am requesting that the Senate uphold the court decision and the State Constitution and keep public land protected for today and tomorrow.

Sherry Stead

Homer Alaska

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Relocating or closing the Tutka Bay Hatchery may not affect the China Poot Dipnet fishery.

I worked for Cook Inlet Aquaculture, mainly collecting data and handling fish at the Bear Creek Weir in Seward. On one of my first assignments in 1989, we flew to Big River across Cook Inlet to collect sockeye salmon eggs and return them to the Trail Lake hatchery to re-establish the sockeye fishery in Resurrection Bay. The egg take required one float plane with people and gear, enough to set up a weir,

collect eggs, camp for several days, and return the eggs for incubation at the Trail Lake hatchery.

As a result, there has been a successful commercial and sport sockeye fishery in Resurrection Bay for almost 3 decades. It is possible to continue the China Poot sockeye fishery without the Tutka Bay hatchery – with very few minor modifications.

State of Alaska stocks fish all over the state.

Sockeye salmon are not incubated in the Tutka Bay Hatchery.

The China Poot sockeye fishery was successful in the years 2004-2011 when the CIAA suspended operations at Tutka Bay.

Don't set a precedent by carving protected land out of Kachemak Bay State Park, and possibly other

state parks!

Thank you,

Kevin Walker, Homer, Alaska

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Regarding HB 52, this is a bad decision for Kachemak Bay. Please vote NO!

Thank you,

Linda Gorman  
Homer, Ak 99603

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Hello Legislators,

My name is Cristen San Roman, I am a 23-year-old resident of the Homer area. I am reaching out to you folks today because my representative, Sarah Vance, has introduced a bill that will be heard in your upcoming session. House Bill 52 aims to remove incredibly beautiful and valuable land from Kachemak Bay State Park to "cure" a legal land disposal that a privately operated hatchery in the park has created.

I am for hatcheries in our State, it is even in our constitution to develop efficient aquaculture, however the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery is not an efficient operation. The facility is harvesting over 80% of the fish they're producing just to cover their own costs, but even by taking that massive chunk of fish they are still in the deficit on average \$850,000 a year. This is a failing operation that is continuing to need loans from the State, and since they are barely producing any fish for the common property fisherman, I do not understand why Rep. Vance sees this as a valuable operation. This community makes an incredible amount of money off of the state park, and near nothing from the hatchery.

Myself and others in the community have prodded her on this, why are you jumping through so many hoops to save this facility that only benefits a very small handful of fishermen, at the expense of a multitude of state park users? She claims she is only interested in curing the land disposal, and that she does not take into account the shortcomings or merits of the hatchery, which I do not understand! How can she work so hard to "save" something she is not willing to look into the details of.

What she will not recognize is that there is an alternative solution to curing the land disposal, and that is to let the hatchery phase itself out of the park over the next 9 years (as stated in the new management plan that the park intends to adopt). If Rep. Vance is not interested in evaluating the pros and cons of the hatchery then it seems to me that the simplest solution would be to let this facility that is causing the disposal to shut down.

Please understand the value that Kachemak Bay State Park brings to my community as well as the state of Alaska. Homer is one of the hottest tourist spots in AK, and the reason people come here is for the glorious scenery, if we start stripping lands in the state park of their protections then we start losing what makes it so unique. Tourists also come here for fishing, but Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery fish are off limits to them because the hatchery harvests nearly all of the fish themselves. They are treating the bay as a private ATM where they are depositing all of these fish and withdrawing most all of them for themselves, that is not how aquaculture is supposed to work in our State.

I encourage you to oppose House Bill 52 and not give away our park to this failing private group.

Thank you for your time,

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Cristen San Roman

Hello,

I would like to voice my opposition to HB-52.

Both enjoying KB State Park (for 30 years) and volunteering in it (for 5 years), I am quite experienced with all that it has to offer.

The proposal in HB-52 violates the draft Kacheamak Bay State Park Management Plan.

Please see that this bill does not become law.

Sincerely,

Andrew Haas

964 Ocean Drive Loop

Homer, AK 99603

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Representatives,

I am writing to express my opposition to House Bill 52. It hurts the citizens of Homer, Cook Inlet fishermen, Alaska's State Park System, and Alaskans. This bill gives up public lands to a narrow special interest group, the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (TBLH), setting a dangerous precedent for all Alaska's State Parks. HB 52 goes against the Draft Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan and the extensive 7-year public process that created it. The Park Plan would relocate the hatchery out of the Park by 2031 and convert structures in the lagoon into "group camp facility." HB 52 seeks to overturn this decision and the public process behind it. This bill just doesn't make sense.

Thank you,

Eric Knudtson

46560 East End Rd

Homer, AK 99603

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Hello Representatives,

I am a resident of the Homer area, actually I am a neighbor of the East End Road roadside parcels Sarah Vance originally planned to "swap" for the Tutka Hatchery.

Please stop HB 52, I, and many Homer area residents I know think the Tutka Hatchery should NO LONGER OPERATE IN THE PARK, and removing any land from the state park is an unacceptable resolution.

If our will as the local community around this government subsidized operation don't matter please consider the following:

HB 52 would permanently give up valuable public resources to a failing operation.

According to publicly available figures, TBLH has been losing approximately \$857,000 per year since 1991, and there is no long range financial plan to turn things around. The Lagoon is a fundamentally flawed location for a hatchery. Deeper water, better freshwater input, and improved access are needed to make it self-supported.

- Who pays?

CIAA has \$16 million of outstanding debts to the State, and part of their loans have been used at the TBLH facility.

All Cook Inlet fishermen pay for TBLH through the Salmon Enhancement Tax, yet only a handful catch Tutka fish. Closing the hatchery is a win for 97.5% of Cook Inlet fishermen.

Thank you for listening to local Alaskans,

Carolyn Westbrook

Homer area resident and business owner

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House Resources Committee,

I am a Homer resident and oppose HB 52. We value those lands in our state park! I have walked on the trails there numerous times. If anything, we need more state park land, not less. The hatchery hasn't proven itself to be an effective operation, and certainly isn't worthy of the loss of these lands from our state park.

Jane Wiebe

Homer

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P.O. Box 2994  
Homer AK 99603

January 2, 2021

Representative Sarah Vance  
Alaska State House  
Juneau AK

Dear Representative Vance:

I do not support House Bill 52 which would extract Tutka Bay Lagoon, and the land on which the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery is located, containing approximately 123.45 acres of land, from Kachemak Bay State Park. This parcel is central to the Park and contains extremely valuable lands and access to other areas.

The hatchery has been an ongoing contentious issue and is contrary to the Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan. Taking this land out of the park for a special interest is a bad precedent for all State Parks in Alaska.

I think it is disingenuous to say that if the hatchery is shut down that the dipnet fishery will go away since there are other hatcheries that can provide the red salmon for this fishery. We can get the red salmon eggs from returning salmon in Kachemak Bay and raise the reds elsewhere like at Trails Lake Hatchery on the Kenai Peninsula. Or ADF&G can foster the program at one of its other hatcheries since it is very popular. It is not necessary to tie it to the Tutka Bay Hatchery. The hatchery closes over time, so there is plenty of time to transition the China Poot stocking program to another hatchery. Make it self-sustaining by selling Salmon Stamps or some other revenue fundraising mechanism.

I have concerns about the over production of pink salmon. The pink runs have grown to the point of flooding estuaries and streams where runs do not even historically occur. Seems like we have more than enough pinks at this point.

This hatchery is not sustainable. The closed, poorly flushing system is overtaxed by the existing operation. The access is very challenging, and the hatchery's poor financial performance makes it a questionable future investment in this location.

Please do not support this bill. Let's find a better place for the hatchery and leave Kachemak Bay State Park intact with the ultimate goal of restoring the lagoon to more of a natural habitat.

Respectfully,

Nina Faust

CC: Rep. Louise Stutes and Senator Gary Stevens

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As a consumer of access to Alaska public lands, I completely disagree with Sara Vance. HB 52 is a BAD idea. Please vote NO on this issue.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Edwards

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Don't cut up our Park for this failing hatchery! HB 52 hurts citizens of Homer, it hurts Cook Inlet fishermen, it hurts Alaska's State Park System, and it hurts Alaskans.

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HB 52 does not meet the Constitution's requirement that Alaska's lands and waters be managed "for the maximum benefit of its people" (Article 8, Section 5) or the requirement for "efficient development of aquaculture in the State" (Article 8, section 15).

Sent from my iPhone

Lisa Schmitz

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Honorable Legislators:

Thank you for all the work you do on behalf of all Alaskans; I am grateful for your work.

Please consider these points regarding House Bill 52; it hurts Cook Inlet fishermen. It hurts Alaska's State Park System, and it hurts Alaskans.

Introduced by one of you, Representative Sarah Vance, during the last legislative session, House Bill 52 (HB 52) removes Tutka Bay Lagoon and uplands—totaling 123.45 acres—from the heart of Kachemak Bay State Park.

This bill gives up these public lands to a narrow special interest group, the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (TBLH), setting a dangerous precedent for all Alaska's State Parks.

HB 52 goes against the Draft Kachemak Bay State Park Management Plan and the extensive 7-year public process that created it. The Park Plan would relocate the hatchery out of the Park by 2031 and convert structures in the lagoon into “group camp facility.” HB 52 seeks to overturn this decision and the public process behind it.

Rep. Vance, you say that if we do not cut Tutka Bay Lagoon out of the Park, China Poot dipnetting will shut down. This does not have to happen; your position comes down to using this popular fishery as political blackmail. Please reconsider this position, as you all discuss this important issue to all of us.

Who pays?

CIAA has \$16 million of outstanding debts to the State, and part of their loans have been used at the TBLH facility.

All Cook Inlet fishermen pay for TBLH through the Salmon Enhancement Tax, yet only a handful catch Tutka fish. Closing the hatchery is a win for 97.5% of Cook Inlet fishermen.

Don't cut up our Park for this failing hatchery! HB 52 hurts citizens of Homer, it hurts Cook Inlet fishermen, it hurts Alaska's State Park System, and it hurts Alaskans.

HB 52 does not meet the Constitution's requirement that Alaska's lands and waters be managed "for the maximum benefit of its people" (Article 8, Section 5) or the requirement for "efficient development of aquaculture in the State" (Article 8, section 15).

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Whytal

po box 1529

Homer, Ak 99603

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NO on 52

Sent from my iPhone

Kathy Sullivan

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To the House Resources Committee,

As a long time resident of Homer, I have a keen interest in how our shared natural resources are best used for the public, both now and for the future. I am highly disturbed about what I've read regarding the proposed removal of 123 acres from Kachemak Bay State Park to benefit a single special interest group, the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery. I hope that you will speak out against and vote no on HB 52.

Sincerely,

Phil Barber

Homer, AK

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HB 52 does not meet the Constitution's requirement that Alaska's lands and waters be managed "for the maximum benefit of its people" (Article 8, Section 5) or the requirement for "efficient development of aquaculture in the State" (Article 8, section 15). Please vote NO on HB 52, do not cut up our state park.

-Mindy Hunter

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Dear Representative Patkotak,

Thank you so much for service to Alaskans in the House of Representatives. We are writing to you from Homer to bring to your attention some significant concerns with House Bill 52, which may be heard by the House Resources Committee this session. HB 52 is bad resource management: it hurts Alaskans, Cook Inlet Fishermen, and the Alaska State Park System.

We have attached some information, and would be more than happy to talk with you about any details of the concerns raised.

- We firmly believe that HB 52 is a waste of the House Resources Committee's time and should be left on the shelf.
- If the House Resources Committee decides to take it up, we strongly urge an inquiry into the finances of CIAA and the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery.
- If the House Resources Committee takes it up, we strongly urge an investigation into the costs and benefits of Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery to Cook Inlet Fishermen.
- We believe that this bill cannot move to the House Floor without first going to the House Finance Committee. Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery is costing Alaskans and commercial fishermen large amounts of money every year--in the form of loans, Salmon Enhancement Taxes, as well as cost to ADF&G and DNR, which are not included in the bill's fiscal note.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Penelope Haas

Vice-President Kachemak Bay Conservation Society

P.S. Here are some recent op-eds on HB 52:

- <https://www.adn.com/opinions/letters/2022/01/23/letter-bad-hatchery-bill/>
- <https://www.adn.com/opinions/letters/2022/01/13/letter-hatchery-misinformation/>
- <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2021/12/12/moving-the-tutka-bay-lagoon-hatchery-makes-good-sense/>

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The Honorable Representative Josiah Patkotak

State Capitol Room 102

Juneau AK, 99801

Phone: 907-465-3473

Representative.Josiah.Patkotak@akleg.gov

Dear Representative Patkotak:

Thank you for serving Alaska as a legislator and special thanks for your leadership of the House Resources Committee.

I taught school in Kaktovik and have a deep appreciation and respect for the people you serve.

I wrote this after listening to my wife's concerns about HB 52. She's on the Citizens Advisory Board for Kachemak Bay State Park which voted unanimously to oppose HB52. They embrace a solution for the illegal agreement Fish and Game entered into with Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association back in 1994 that is listed in the Kachemak Bay State Park Draft Management Plan. It is a solution the Board and public process put 7 years into. The solution gives the Tutka Bay Hatchery 10 ample years to relocate to a place where they will be able to succeed. The Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery is failing and owes the State 16 million dollars. They have rarely been able to even recover costs..

I listened to the reasons she expressed and it became apparent, the bill is being marketed falsely. Those pursuing it are trying to dupe the public. I hope this will lend clarity.

Dear Representative Patkotak,

I oppose HB 52 for these eight reasons:

1) The bill establishes a dangerous precedent of removing State Park land and giving it to private entities. The legislature had the foresight on May 9th, 1970 to provide the highest level of protection for Tutka Bay Lagoon in Alaska Statutes 41.21.131-134 and AS 41.21.140-142. They declared Tutka Bay

Lagoon as part of Kachemak Bay State Park and withdrew it from public domain under Article VIII, section 7 of the Alaska Constitution.

2) This private entity (Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association - CIAA) is failing financially.

CIAA receives money from the state and fishermen. A thousand Cook Inlet fishermen have paid \$26 million to CIAA over thirty years in "salmon enhancement taxes". Each year the state puts out loans to keep the Tutka lagoon hatchery afloat. CIAA owes \$17 million over its 20 years in operation. It's debt mounts (\$1.2 million to operate - \$0.4 in "cost recovery" = \$0.8 million) \$800,000 every year. Fishing is risky business, there are no guarantees, except in this case. A hatchery has been established to reproduce and plant fish that will return and seventeen seine boats are fishing these salmon for "cost recovery" creating a class of welfare fishermen that subsist on government support (a fish tax paid by all for the harvest of a few).

3) The hatchery is now only capable of producing pink salmon (a much lower fish value than reds or silvers) due to fish bacteria and IHNV, a fish virus. Infected fish from the lagoon can pass the virus to other salmon. Fish feces and carcasses are not readily flushed out of the shallow lagoon and Tutka creek (the water source for the hatchery) is not sufficient to raise the amount of fish they raise in the lagoon. Net pens must be hauled to better waters.. Seine boats can't access the lagoon at most tides. To become productive physically and fiscally the hatchery must move to deeper waters and a creek with more volume of fresh water. Hatchery standards have not been monitored and there has not been ecological studies done on the effects on the environment. Sam Rabung may refute this but ask him to show you evidence. It has not happened.

4) Tutka Bay Lagoon hatchery is producing 15 times as many pink salmon as the wild salmon species the area once supported. This monoculture of pink salmon makes it difficult for wild species of salmon, as well as clams, crab, shrimp and other species to survive (and impossible to flourish) due to competition and lack of food. Pinks sell for 1\$ a pound, Dungeness crab goes for \$30 a pound. Spot shrimp \$25 a pound. There is currently no market for pinks in Kachemak Bay. The biodiversity so vital to the interdependence of our ecosystem is at stake.

5) Tutka Bay is in the heart of the park. The proposed exchange for an unfunded parking lot miles away, on the Homer side (already DNR owned and the majority already donated to the park) is in no way an equivalent trade for the unique and exceptionally beautiful lands of Tutka Bay Lagoon (which meet the criteria the Park was created for by the Legislature). The lagoon is prime park land. Why does the hatchery require 123 acres of uplands if the buildings they hold sit on only 5 acres?

6) Sarah Vance and Sam Rabung are confusing the issues. Threats like "If Tutka Lagoon is not cut out of the State Park, the very loved China Poot Dip Net fishery will be ended." The China Poot Dip Net fishery

does not have to be lost. The hatchery closed for 10 years and the China Poot Dip Net Fishery continued because the China Poot Sockeye salmon are reared at Trail Lakes Hatchery near Seward, not Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery. Science says the China Poot Dip Net fishery could easily continue but the ultimatum makes it much more likely to get people confused and fearful. It is like holding a cherished child ransom for the failing hatchery.

- 7) The water quality is not tested nor has the hatchery met annually with State Parks as required in their permit. Minimally, hatchery standards must be measured and effects on the environment periodically reviewed. Fish and Game has no money for this, nor does Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association.
- 8) Representative Vance's proposed solution HB 52 to rectify the problem - disposing state park land to a private entity - does exactly that. It gives park land away!

Please Representative Patkotak, don't fall for it!

Gordy Vernon

Box 3

Homer AK 99603

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I understand that the House Resources Committee will be considering HB 52. I live in Homer and have been a resident of Alaska since 1970. I would really appreciate the opportunity to talk to Representative Patkotak about the issues surrounding this proposed legislation. My phone number is 907 250-4033. Thank you very much.

Bruce Friend

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Sent from my iPhone