

Good Afternoon Chairman Johnson and members of the House Finance committee

For the record, my name is Sue Ely and I am here on behalf of the Alaska Conservation Alliance, a coalition of 40 Alaskan conservation organizations with a combined membership of over 38,000 Alaskans. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB12, establishing the Alaska Council on Invasive Species in the Department of Fish and Game.

Alaska is home to an amazing abundance of plant and animal life. Whether valued as charismatic Alaskan icons, or as the source of our continued economic and subsistence prosperity, Alaska's flora and fauna are vital to our economic well being Alaska way of life. However, these resources could be threatened by the spread of invasive species.

Already Alaska has suffered the effects of invasive Atlantic Salmon, pike and Reed Canary grass, to name a few. Plants, animals, fish and crustaceans, introduced into an environment devoid of their natural predators and limitations can irreversibly destroy an ecosystem and that destruction can translate into direct monetary, cultural and lifestyle impacts. Invasive species have cost lower 48 economies billions of

dollars in revenue. In order for Alaska to avoid a similar fate, it is prudent to address this issue now.

I believe the 14-member Council will provide the broad stakeholder cooperation and oversight needed to prevent new invasive species from taking root in Alaska and to mitigate the damage of invasives already introduced. At risk are Alaska's biological treasures; its harvested resources and subsistence plants and animals; the beauty and diversity that make Alaska a world-class tourist destination. It is our understanding and our hope that the least amount of the least toxic management tools would be used to control marine invasive species and that pesticides be used only as a last resort.

The Alaska Conservation Alliance would like to thank you for this opportunity to voice our support for HB 12 and encourage you to pass this bill out of the House Finance Committee.

Thank you Chairman Johnson and House Finance Committee members very much for all of your hard work and for giving me the chance to speak today.