

Linda Hay

From: Tim Stallard <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
Categories: Linda

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?

At 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



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

211 Fourth Street, Suite 110
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1172
(907) 586-2820
(907) 463-2545 Fax
E-Mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org
www.ufa-fish.org

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Representative Paul Scaton, 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 Scaton & 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 Tendermen'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