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Anchorage, AK 99524-3963

February 17, 2011

Representative Les Gara  
State Capitol 500  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Gara:

I'm writing you today in support of HB 144, which would direct the Department of Natural Resources to report annually to the legislature on its efforts to maintain or enhance access to and along fishing streams as well as its objectives for enhancing and maintaining access to and along fishing streams by the public in the upcoming year.

As the owner of a licensed fly fishing guide service in Alaska, I believe that the Department of Natural Resources should play an active role in assisting the public to have access, wherever possible, to a wide variety of fishing opportunities. The bill would put in place a mechanism for voluntary land exchanges (or purchases) between the State and private owners along important recreational rivers. This would help us avoid the purchases of such lands for development, thus denying the public's use of them. Other efforts could involve working with riparian land owners to identify sections of bank access that could be utilized by the public either free or through a paid access corridor would certainly be worthwhile to pursue as well. "Enhancing access to fishing streams," might also mean identifying areas where people are trespassing on either public or private land to get access to various waterways, which would also provide valuable information on where the Department should direct efforts in opening or developing fishing opportunities to the public.

I would urge members of the House Fisheries Committee to support HB 144.

Sincerely,

Cecilia "Pudge" Kleinkauf