



Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 9 Fairbanks

Sponsor Statement for HB 100

“An Act prohibiting growing or cultivating genetically modified fish in the state.”

House Bill 100 (HB100) “An Act Prohibiting Growing or Cultivating Genetically Modified Fish in the State” has been introduced to extend the current prohibition of farming fish to include genetically modified salmon.

In 2010 the FDA began to hear testimony to approve a hybrid Atlantic salmon as the first genetically engineered animal for human consumption. The hybrid Atlantic salmon has been engineered by crossing Chinook salmon growth genes and an antifreeze gene from an eel, the ocean pout. The genes allow the new creation dubbed the AquAdvantage salmon to grow about twice as fast as its natural counterpart. The FDA’s consideration for approval of this “frankenfish” is a risky precedent and a threat to Alaska’s wild salmon.

Salmon farms in Canada, Europe and South America have been criticized for crowded conditions, fecal contamination, use of chemicals, proliferation of disease and escapees. Atlantic salmon have been caught in Alaska’s waters, escaping from neighboring fish farms in British Columbia - many infested with sea lice. They are considered an invasive species by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. As Alaskans we must do everything to keep these foreign invaders out of Alaskan waters.

Alaska’s fishing industry is valued at 1.5 billion annually, and \$3.6 billion wholesale, according to Alaska Department of Fish and Game. Some studies have shown that AquAdvantage fish could eliminate wild populations within 30 years and poses real environmental risks to the sustainability of the fish, and the pocketbooks of Alaskans. HB 100 will prohibit the growth, sale or release of genetically engineered fish in Alaska, keeping Alaska’s salmon safe.

This legislation does not restrict Alaska Department of Fish and Game activities including fishery rehabilitation, enhancement, and development. HB 100 also allows the rearing and sale of ornamental finfish for aquariums or ponds as long as the fish are not released in Alaskan waters.

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