

Alaska State Legislature

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REPRESENTATIVE PAUL SEATON HOUSE DISTRICT 30

Sponsor Statement

CSHB 143 (FIN)

CSHB 143(FIN) limits the purchase of a short-term commercial fishing crewmember license to one per year. This limitation addresses the growing problem of multiple consecutive short-term license purchases.

The 7-day license was created by the Legislature as a way for tourists to experience commercial fishing in Alaska. These short-term crew licenses (also known as dude licenses) have been successful in their original intent, but there is concern that fishing crew members who would otherwise purchase an annual license are instead purchasing numerous consecutive short-term licenses.

As a trend, this decreases license receipt revenue to the state and impacts the Fishermen's Fund (a fund administered by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to assist with the medical costs of accidents incurred during commercial fishing operations). As a group, those purchasing short-term licenses may be less experienced on a commercial vessel, and thus more likely to get injured, placing a burden on the Fishermen's Fund without helping to adequately pay for the program.

CSHB 143 (FIN) specifies that if a person purchases a short-term license and subsequently purchases an annual license in the same year, they are to be reimbursed for the cost of the short-term license.