

Alaska State Legislature



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SPONSOR STATEMENT SENATE BILL 79

Sport fishing is a key element of Alaska's cultural and economic landscape and the sustainable development of our fisheries is one of the Legislature's fundamental constitutional responsibilities. According to the Department of Fish and Game, each year approximately 460,000 individuals spend roughly 2.5 million days sport fishing in Alaska. Sport fishing and especially guided sport fishing has become an integral part of Alaska's economy. The most current economic data on sport fishing from 2007 shows that guided sport fishing contributed an estimated \$641 million to Alaska's economy and supported 7,183 jobs. Annual direct expenditures attributed to sport fishing totaled \$1.4 billion, or 3.1% of the total gross state product (GSP). In 2012, 1,263 sport fishing business were licensed in the state, with 1,714 guides working for those businesses.

The sport fishing guide services industry is also an important source of information for fisheries managers. Sport fishing guides currently provide logbook data to the Department of Fish and Game, which provides the department with one of the critical tools required to manage our fisheries. Senate Bill 79 provides for an electronic method for forms, records and report distribution, receipt, and storage.

Senate Bill 79 seeks to achieve two goals, each consistent with the language set forth in the State Constitution which mandates sustainable development for the maximum economic benefit of Alaska. The first goal is to assure that Alaska's sport fishing services continue to compete favorable in the marketplace with the best in the world. The second goal is to assure that, as the state's valuable fishery resources are invested in the sport fishing services industry, the State of Alaska is doing so as would a diligent investor in any business. SB 79 achieves these goals by establishing a more accurate, stable and appropriate regulatory framework than currently exists. Also, by shifting regulation of the industry from the Department of Fish and Game to a Sport Fishing Guide Services Board established within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, SB 79 places sport fishing guides alongside other analogous industry groups. The new board is modeled on a similar board created for big game guides in 2005 and will promote self-regulation, quality control and accountability in the industry.