



Alaska Trollers Association

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April 1, 2013

Representative Paul Seaton, Chairman
House Fisheries Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Seaton and Committee Members:

The Alaska Trollers Association opposes HB 98, which seeks to establish parameters and terms via statute for setting salmon escapement goals for stocks of concern.

There are already procedures in place whereby the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG), in consultation with the Board of Fisheries (Board), may establish escapement goals for stocks of concern. Given the complexities inherent in such an endeavor, we believe these highly technical decisions are best left in the hands of our state's outstanding fisheries scientists utilizing an open, transparent Board process.

Setting and achieving salmon escapement goals relies on sound data and rigorous analyses combined with well-designed fishery management plans. ADFG managers and the Board must be able to react promptly and make science-based corrections as necessary, with a minimum of political influence. This is precisely why Alaska's founders and previous legislatures felt it best to mandate sustainability and then leave the details to ADFG and the Board.

It is not in the best interest of the salmon resource or our state's citizens to bind the hands of ADFG and the Board on these matters. It is also unnecessary to take legislative action to develop the language embodied in HB 98, because the appropriate policies and provisions to guide ADFG are already provided for in regulation.¹ In most cases, ADFG has been successful at addressing short term dips in abundance. And while such declines are no doubt frustrating for all concerned, ADFG regularly applies additional study to these complex issues and modifies management strategies where appropriate.

The very best way the legislature can help secure the sustainability of our salmon resources, is to encourage excellence in management and consistently provide ADFG sufficient resources to achieve the goal.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dale Kelley".

Executive Director

¹ [5 AAC 39.222\(f\)](#)