

Senator John Coghill, Jr.  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Juneau, AK 99801

March 17, 2013

RE: SB 60

Dear Senator Coghill:

I am a commercial fisherman that lives in Petersburg. I have fished Dungeness crab since 1991. It has been, and still is a viable endeavor, despite losing several productive areas to sea otter predation. With the current rate of growth of the sea otter population it is just a matter of time before our commercial fishery is lost. That is why I am strongly supporting SB 60 as a start to remedy the devastation of our state's valuable resources.

Since this is the Judiciary Committee, I assume legal aspects of this bill will be addressed here. While I am not an attorney, I do not see anywhere in this bill anything that would preempt the existing federal law that manages sea mammals. A bounty would ONLY be paid on proof to the state that a sea otter was taken by a person who legally could, AFTER that person had met his federal obligations.

A good friend of mine who is native, and who harvests sea otters explained the nuts and bolts of the system to me. When he harvests an otter, he notifies the local National Fish and Wildlife agent, who tags the animal. This tag has a specific and unique number on it. My friend is given a receipt, a copy of which is retained by the agent, and my friends obligation is complete. There are restrictions of what can be done with that pelt, but those issues are the sole responsibility of federal agency policing the management. The receipt received by my friend should be ample evidence for the state as to the legal taking of an otter.

This bill does nothing to the current management regime currently in effect. It does not, in any way, enable anybody to harvest that isn't already allowed to do so.

Once again, I will disqualify myself as an attorney. It does seem to me that at worst, this bill would be arguable in a court of law. I feel very strongly about Alaska's resources, and I find it unconscionable that the state of Alaska is not allowed to the table when it comes to management of a highly predatory species that is having an extremely negative effect on those resources that we are constitutionally obligated to protect and preserve. I see this bill as a possible way that our great state can have a hand, or at least a foot into the door, in bringing responsible management to all resources important to both economic and traditional users.

Thanks,

Max Worhatch