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Representative Paul Seaton
120 4th Street State Capital Room 102
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Subject: SB 54

Mr. Chairman:

I am writing to you today in support of Senate Bill 54 which would extend the termination date of the authority of the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to maintain vessels - based limited entry fisheries for the Weathervane Scallop and Bering Sea hair crab fisheries until December 30, 2018. I would hope that this bill will move out of the Fisheries Committee that you are the Chairman of very soon.

I have worked in the Alaska Seafood industry for 30 years in Unalaska, working for two different companies in the Unalaska/Dutch Harbor area, and have firsthand knowledge of these fisheries. The main reason I support this bill is that it will continue to be basically a rationalized cooperative based fishery. If this fishery goes back into an open access mode in state waters for this small amount of poundage, this will create major problems for Alaska Department of Fish and Game on how they will manage it; if there too many vessels involved ADFG may decide not open it. With new players getting involved in the fishery bycatch issues could increase with vessels operators that aren't familiar with the fishing grounds increasing bycatch amounts that could close productive fishing areas.

I believe it is important to allow this cooperative to be extended until 2018. It is important that operators who have worked this fishery, are dependent on this fishery, and have produced a first class product, have reduced bycatch in many areas, should be able continue to work this fishery. I've seen first hand the problems with over-capitalized fisheries in the Halibut/Sablefish, Pollock, and Bering Sea Crab Fisheries. A more rationalized fishery is the way to go in this situation, with fewer players you have less bycatch, a better product is produced at a higher value, and management of the fishery is also improved. I would urge you to pass this bill from the Fisheries Committee as soon as possible it the right thing to do. If you have any questions or concerns my contact numbers are listed above.

Sincerely



Frank Kelty

CC: Rep. Bob Herron
Rep. Bryce Edgmon
Sen. Cathy Giessel