

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Bill 258 and House Joint Resolution 28: Legislation to Protect Wild Alaska Salmon and the Commercial Fishing Industry during these Challenging Economic Times

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 258 and House Joint Resolution 28 are designed to protect our wild Alaska salmon and support our thriving, sustainable fisheries. HB 258 will prohibit the sale of genetically modified salmon, known as “Frankenfish,” in the State of Alaska. HJR 28 denounces the recent approval of AquaBounty’s AquaAdvantage genetically engineered salmon. This is the first time the United States Food and Drug Administration has approved a genetically modified animal for human consumption.

The State of Alaska prides itself in producing the highest quality wild seafood. The commercial fishing industry is the largest private sector employer and annual seafood exports are worth over \$3.25 billion. Residents fill their freezers and smoke houses with healthy wild seafood. This industry and way of life would be jeopardized with the inevitable, accidental release of transgenic fish into the wild.

In addition to the impact to the commercial, sport and subsistence fishing, the long-term health effects of consuming genetically engineered salmon are unknown. A majority of state residents oppose the approval of the genetically engineered salmon and more than 2,000,000 nationwide submitted comments opposing the approval of AquaBounty’s genetically engineered salmon. Additionally, 40 members of congress have voiced opposition.

HB 258, “An Act prohibiting the sale of genetically modified fish or fish product,” would ban stores from selling the newly approved AquaBounty genetically engineered salmon and seafood products in Alaska. HJR 28 is designed to raise awareness about the importance of wild seafood and the commercial fishing industry while highlighting the concerns regarding the long term safety of consuming genetically engineered food products.

In the State of Alaska, where sustainable wild caught seafood is such an important part of life, prohibiting the sale of genetically modified fish and fish product and opposing the approval of genetically engineered salmon nationwide is the right thing to do for both consumers and the fishing industry.