

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

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February 2, 2016

Representative Geran Tarr
Room 409 Capitol Bldg., Juneau, AK, 99801
1 (907) 465-3424
rep.geran.tarr@akleg.gov

Dear Representative Tarr and interested others:

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters, an Alaska fisherman's organization representing 473 salmon gillnet permit holders and their families, strongly SUPPORTS House Bill 258 and House Joint Resolution 28.

Passing HB 258 makes the selling of genetically engineered fish and fish products in Alaska impossible and passing HJR 28 would support our disapproval of genetically engineered salmon via AquaBounty. The gillnetters of Southeast Alaska fish for wild Alaska salmon throughout southeast and sell their high quality, healthy catch around the world. Last year, it was valued at over \$18.8 million. Genetically modified salmon threatens the wild Alaska salmon and seafood markets by confusing consumers and potentially harming wild salmon runs and ecosystems.

Although AquaBounty plans to initially produce its salmon in Panama, the company will reportedly pursue production options closer to its market, the United States. We do not support the production of genetically modified salmon in our state or our country and appreciate our state's constitution that bans farmed salmon production. Past experiences, such as Asian carps' invasion into the rivers of the Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri, show us that containment systems are not always foolproof and can be extremely damaging to an area's ecology, economy and way of life. The risks to Alaskans and to salmon eaters around the world are too great to proceed with this experiment.

The world is watching Alaska's reaction to the national FDA's approval of genetically modified salmon and AquaBounty. Alaska needs to pass these bills to protect the integrity of its seafood and show the world they can trust our seafood brands.

Thank you for your consideration,



Cynthia Wallesz
Executive Director