

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 119: Bristol Bay Fisheries Act

House Bill 119 aims to further protect Bristol Bay against the impacts of a large-scale, metallic sulfide mine located in the watershed of the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve (BBFR).

Bristol Bay boasts the largest sockeye salmon runs on earth and the fisheries targeting those stocks are major economic drivers for the economies in Alaska, Washington and Oregon. Last November, Alaskans clearly expressed their interest in protecting their prized salmon resource by passing Ballot Measure 4, requiring the legislature to approve any large-scale metallic sulfide mine in the BBFR.

HB 119 goes a step beyond the voter initiative, by requiring the Commissioners of the Departments of Natural Resource, Environmental Conservation and Fish and Game, to make independent determinations that an applicant has proven, beyond a reasonable doubt, that a proposed mine would not constitute a danger to the fisheries.

Protecting the waters and wild salmon of the BBFR is of paramount importance to maintaining the region's fisheries, economic benefits, cultural heritage, and unique wild salmon resources.

I invite you to discuss this issue with me further and urge you to support this legislation.