



March 15th, 2016

Dear House Fisheries Committee and Senate Resources Committee,

Clean water is a critical component of the health of our fisheries and subsequently our businesses. We are writing you today to express concerns regarding Governor Walker's proposal, (SB 163) to change the responsibility for rulemaking for Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to the Alaska State Legislature.

Our businesses depend on southwest Alaska's clean water and productive rivers for fishing, hunting and recreating. Currently, this region is home to over 75 operating lodges and outfitters who are deeply dependent on healthy fisheries to survive.

The Kaktuli River, which sits at the headwaters of Alaska's largest commercial sockeye fishery, is one of Southwest Alaska's legendary sportfishing rivers, drawing anglers, hunters, and outdoor recreationists from around the world to enjoy its pristine water and bountiful wildlife. For this reason, several of us joined other stakeholders in 2010 and again in 2012, in submitting an application to ADEC to designate the Kaktuli as ONRW, or Tier 3 water, for its support of an Alaskan way of life.

SB 163/HB 283 raises three specific issues that concern us, particularly when thinking about putting our fisheries first for the good of Alaskan interests now and for future generations.

First, SB 163/HB 283 places ownership of resources that are to be managed in the best interest of all Alaskans into the hands of politicians. The bill creates a series of hurdles for securing an ONRW designation, disfavoring Alaskans and opening up the door to the influence of Outside development companies. Granting ONRW designation power to the Alaska Legislature creates a clear **imbalance** between managing Alaska's important resources for the benefit of all Alaskans and political gain. SB 163/HB 283 represent a regression from a clear and transparent process to a process clouded by the agendas of partisan politics.

Second, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's control over ONRW designation ensures that decisions are made based on measurable standards from fisheries science to economics. This, therefore, sets consistent standards of evaluation and **accountability** for all cases across the board.

Third, it SB 163/HB 283 creates a more cumbersome process, discouraging public involvement in the management of the resources that belong to them.

It is clear that management of Alaska's exceptional recreation and ecologically productive resources, like the Kaktuli River, deserve to be conducted predictably and without political influence.

We encourage you to oppose SB 163/HB 283 when it is heard in your committees to help ensure Outstanding National Resources Water designation is driven by sound science and Alaskans, not politics.

Sincerely,

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