

April 1, 2015

Dear Representative Stutes:

My name is Steve Merritt and I am a commercial fisherman living in Craig, Alaska. I oppose HB 110 which seeks to provide a priority for personal use fisheries second only to subsistence. I do not believe that such a priority is necessary or reflects the true nature of personal use fisheries.

The concern I have with HB 110 is that it undermines the confidence of the Alaskan people in the Board of Fisheries process. When issues develop concerning the sustainability of the fisheries resource in Alaska, I have every confidence that the Board of Fisheries process will handle it fairly and appropriately. Bills of the nature of HB 110 are just selfish attempts to micro manage that process which is world renown as being one of the best.

Ask yourself, why is it necessary for the personal use fishery to be treated on a level equal to that of the subsistence fisheries of this state? My answer is it shouldn't. Subsistence fisheries have been granted highest priority in times of resource shortages, because they are intended to provide the basic necessities of life for rural residents.

Personal use fisheries are not in my opinion anywhere near the importance level of the subsistence fishery. There is no reason what so ever that the personal use fisheries cannot be managed under the 8 allocation criteria standards used by the Board of Fisheries in managing sport, commercial and charter fisheries of Alaska. Will someone starve if their sport bag limit is reduced? No. Commercial fisheries reduced? No. Charter fishery restrictions? No. Personal use limit? No. Subsistence? YES!! So why elevate personal use to a level it truly does not belong?

So in closing I ask you to oppose HB 110 and leave the management of the personal use fisheries in the hands of the Board of Fisheries. This process has proven itself capable and there are not any signs that it is beginning to fail. I urge you to keep your confidence in that process and do not fall prey to the inappropriate belief HB 110 is necessary!! IT is NOT!!

Sincerely,

Steve Merritt  
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District 35