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NATIVE VILLAGE OF EKLUTNA

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4/5/2017

Representative Louise Stutes  
State Capitol Room 406  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Stutes,

Thank you for introducing HB 199. This bill responds both to the letter from the Alaska Board of Fisheries, and to a request to the Board of Fisheries that many Alaskans, including Native Village of Eklutna with Resolution 2016-23 (attached), commercial, sport, personal use, and subsistence fish harvesters and more weighed in on to the Board. The importance of salmon to our tribe's cultural and physical health cannot be overstated. Salmon is our primary traditional food source and provides a metabolically healthy diet. Protecting salmon habitat assures this resource will be available to our people for generations to come.

Native Village of Eklutna is concerned that Title 16 has not been updated since statehood and these updates are critical. We see that House Bill 199 updates Title 16 by:

- Creating clear scientific and enforceable standards for ADF&G to identify important habitat characteristics, like water quality, instream flow levels, fish passage, and riparian areas that need to be maintained to protect and support the sustainability of Alaska's fisheries.
- Giving Alaskans a much needed voice in the permitting process, where Title 16 does not currently mandate public input and involvement.
- Mandating updating the state's Anadromous Catalogue to include any waterways that produce salmon. This update ensures that we're not leaving important salmon waters unprotected.
- Creating commonsense standards for mitigation that a developer must meet to protect wild salmon before the project can move forward.

In total, HB199 updates empower Alaska Department of Fish and Game to objectively evaluate and mitigate projects that could unduly impact Alaska's salmon habitat and ensure that Alakans have a clear voice to stand up for the future of our fisheries.

Sincerely,

Lee Stephan  
President and First Chief