

4/7/16

I am writing in support of HB 199, Fish Habitat Permit regulations.

I first visited Alaska in 2007, floating and fishing its rivers, and was overcome by its abundant salmon fisheries. 40 years ago I was privileged to catch a wild Atlantic Salmon in the Penobscot River in Maine. Wild Atlantic Salmon runs are now extirpated there, dead by a thousand cuts.

Inspired by an Alaskan landscape that still supports wild salmon I chose to move here. Since then I have worked at fish hatcheries in Prince William Sound, as a deckhand on a charter boat out of Seward, and have now settled back into my long standing career as a professional land surveyor. I've bought a house, bring friends and family up to visit, and remain here under the grasp of our wondrous landscape. I like to view myself as a contributing member of the Alaskan community and economy, working in a profession that thrives on development and still recognize the importance of, even attribute my being here, to the salmon teeming in our rivers.

I believe I can safely say that we all share the integrity of our wild salmon runs as an important value. So important that their sustainability is enshrined in our Alaskan constitution. I think I can also say that we all value the importance of a participatory democracy.

Unfortunately, our current state law, particularly AS 16.05, has no specific criteria to protect salmon habitat or involve the citizens of Alaska in the detailed decisions about protecting salmon habitat.

HB 199 improves upon this unsatisfactory state of affairs by:

- 1) Creating objective and enforceable habitat protection standards like water quality, in stream flow, fish passage and fry rearing riparian habitat.
- 2) Expands ADF&G's authority to protect fish habitat to all salmon streams in the state by a rebuttable assumption that all waters are salmon streams. Aren't they?
- 3) Streamlines permitting for minor activities via a two-tiered system.
- 4) Creates an efficient general permit for landscape scale but minor activities.
- 5) Gives me personally a voice in the process by providing public notice and comment periods.
- 6) Puts some teeth in the protection by giving ADF&G enforcement authority.

Without HB 199 every salmon habitat permit issued will have no criteria, no public participation and no enforcement teeth. Each permit will be more likely to diminish the salmon habitat, a cut a time. What we do today will affect our wild salmon for generations to come. Please value our wild salmon by protecting their habitat via HB 199.

Please do not let wild salmon in Alaska die a death by a thousand cuts as they have on the east coast.

Thank you,

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