

Dear Members of the House Fisheries Committee,

To many, the Kenai Peninsula is meaningless without fish. I live here, so the Peninsula means a little bit more than that to me, but I understand the importance of salmon in my community. My name is Jode Sparks. I live in Sterling, and I am the Junior Class President at Soldotna High School. Salmon play a vital economic and cultural role in Soldotna, and on the Peninsula as a whole. The Kenai River flows through downtown Soldotna, providing recreation and jobs to the community. I have friends who live to fish in the summer; I have other friends who live through fish, friends who work as commercial and subsistence fishermen. Salmon benefit my community indirectly as well.

Salmon fuel one of the biggest pillars of Alaska's economy. In the summer, the salmon run brings with it tourists from across the globe. They flood our town with liveliness and needed financial stimulus. They come for our clear waters and our incredible fishing. Tourists don't come to our state to see empty mines.

In my town, like towns across Alaska, salmon mean economic and cultural vitality.

I support HB 199 because it ensures that Alaskan's have a voice in the future of their salmon. HB 199 will provide the Alaska Department of Fish and Game with the tools they need to prevent unsustainable development. This bill would require developers to follow a science-based approach that would ensure healthy salmon for future generations. HB 199 would make Alaska's habitat permitting laws work for the people and for the land.

Salmon streams are the lifeblood of my city, my region, and my state. If you support a sustainable Alaska, I urge you to support HB 199.

Thank you for your consideration of my testimony.

Jode Sparks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jode Sparks". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jode" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sparks".