



April 10, 2017

Honorable Members of the 30th Alaska Legislature
Submitted via email

Dear Alaska Policy Maker:

The undersigned broad coalition of entities, with very diverse interests, write to share our deep concern with House Bill 199 (HB 199), “An Act establishing general fish and wildlife permits and major and minor anadromous fish habitat permits for certain activities; establishing related penalties; and relating to the protection of fish and game and fish and game habitat.”

This coalition has agreed that concerns with HB 199 start with simple questions: Why is this bill necessary? What is it trying to fix? What is the real fiscal impact?

As each entity further examines HB 199, we wish to express our initial overlying areas of concern that this bill would seriously impact:

- Community development – including upgrades to infrastructure, such as airports and roads, construction of wastewater treatment plants, natural community growth, and more.
- Economic development – including fish processing, timber harvests, mineral extraction, and oil and gas development.
- A future gas pipeline to transport Alaska’s natural gas from the North Slope to markets.

The intent to safeguard Alaska’s salmon fisheries is an objective we share and it is why we support Alaska’s existing rigorous and science-based regulatory system. Shutting down economic and community development is a disproportionate response to a problem that doesn’t exist.

As a coalition that includes urban and rural Alaskans, and businesses and associations representing tens of thousands of jobs for our state’s citizens, we cannot overstate how important it is to have consistent regulatory and permitting processes.

This coalition knows community and resource development projects in Alaska can be and are done responsibly, with a strong focus on protecting the environment, cultural activities, and wildlife, while providing good-paying jobs, quality of life, and opportunities for people to remain in their communities. Instead, HB 199 would likely cause costly delays for community projects like airport expansions and village wastewater facility upgrades. It could ultimately halt even the smallest of projects.

Further, the added costs of the bill, while still unknown, will likely deepen our State's fiscal crisis. The added time to resource agencies, as well as permit applicants, would increase uncertainty and cost for development opportunities without a corresponding benefit to fish habitat.

Many of the groups will contact you directly with detailed concerns, but given the issues we have raised above, we urge you not to move this bill forward. It is fundamentally flawed and poses a grave threat to Alaska's economy.

Thank you,

Shelly Wright, Executive Director
Southeast Conference

Marleanna Hall, Executive Director
Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.

Marisa Sharrah, President & CEO
Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

Neil MacKinnon, President
First Things First Alaska Foundation

Jim Dodson, President & CEO
Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation

Sarah Obed, VP of External Affairs
Doyon Limited

John Binkley, President
Cruise Lines International Association Alaska

Karen Matthias, Executive Director
Council of Alaska Producers

Sophie Minich, President & CEO
Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

John MacKinnon, Executive Director
Associated General Contractors of Alaska

Bill Popp, President
Anchorage Economic Development Corporation

Jeremy Price, State Director
Americans for Prosperity, Alaska

Aves Thompson, Executive Director
Alaska Trucking Association

Rebecca Logan, General Manager
Alaska Support Industry Alliance

Kara Moriarty, President & CEO
Alaska Oil and Gas Association

Deantha Crockett, Executive Director
Alaska Miners Association

Owen Graham, Executive Director
Alaska Forest Association

Curtis Thayer, President & CEO
Alaska Chamber