



April 21, 2017

Representative Tarr
State Capital Room 126
Juneau AK, 99801
Rep.geran.tarr@akleg.gov

Representative Josephson
State Capital Room 102
Juneau AK, 99801
rep.andy.josephson@akleg.gov

RE: Opposition to H.B. 107, Fish Enhancement Permits

Dear Representative Tarr and Representative Josephson,

Please accept this letter on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU) and its more than 1,000 Alaskan members. As discussed in greater detail below, TU has serious concerns with H.B 107 and encourage you to not allow it to move forward.

TU is the nation's largest sportsman's organization dedicated to coldwater conservation with more than 1,000 members in Alaska. TU members own and operate businesses—including sport-fishing lodges, air taxi services and commercial fishing operations—that depend on Alaska's world-class wild salmon fisheries and productive salmon systems. In addition to our members in more remote parts of the state, TU has active chapters in Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Mat-Su, on the Kenai Peninsula, and in Southeast Alaska.

One of the key characteristics that makes Alaska stand out among the rest of the world is that, with rare exception, our salmon populations remain strong and wild. This is because we have carefully avoided wide-spread deleterious impacts to our valuable salmon habitat; have carefully and sustainably managed our commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries; and have maintained the genetic diversity of our salmon stocks by avoiding careless and indiscriminate hatchery practices. We have largely avoided the many pitfalls that plague salmon fisheries in the Pacific Northwest and throughout much of the rest of the globe.

H.B. 107 risks irreversible and unforeseeable harm to our wild salmon fisheries. Alaska's existing hatcheries are heavily regulated, sited at locations that help to isolate hatchery-produced salmon from wild-spawned fish, and are managed specifically to avoid harm to natural stocks. H.B. 107 departs from existing hatchery practices by providing very little oversight or regulation, explicitly encouraging the mixing of native and hatchery fish, and by targeting natural stocks that are most vulnerable to negative impacts from hatcheries. While the Alaska Department of Fish and Game has done quite well managing Alaska's existing hatcheries under current laws and regulations to avoid impacts to wild salmon populations, H.B. 107 would set a dangerous precedent by circumventing this existing regulatory structure to create a whole new type of enhancement program without adequate safeguards.

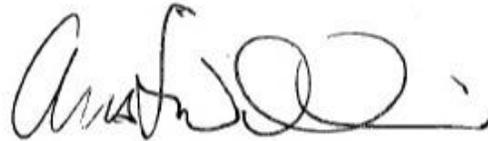
Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization

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For these reasons, we encourage you to not allow H.B. 107 to move forward. Maintaining the natural reproduction of our salmon populations is central to Alaska's identity and to the well-being of its residents. Our wild salmon fisheries provide a robust economic foundation for many Alaska communities, provide once-in-a-lifetime recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, are an important food source for many, and are the cultural underpinning for many Alaskans of all walks of life. Thank you for your careful consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Austin Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Austin Williams
Alaska Director of Law and Policy
awilliams@tu.org