

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to certain fish; and establishing a fisheries enhancement permit. "

HB 199 is a natural fish population enhancement bill, you can't go wrong with more fish for Alaskans in our opinion. Salmon is one of our most precious resources in Alaska and likely our largest natural food source. Although the Dept. of Fish & Game is currently not counting the fish populations in many rivers in our interior district such as the Nenana, Tanana and upper Yukon rivers, the locals can attest that the fish populations are not nearly what they used to be. Fish populations throughout the state especially king salmon runs have been very low in recent years, this bill will help bring more fish to all Alaskans.

HB 199 would allow individuals, Alaskan corporations, school districts or other organizations to apply for a fish enhancement permit through the Dept. Fish & Game. If the commissioner grants a permit, the individuals, Alaskan corporations, school districts or other organizations would be allowed to collect a limited amount of fish, fertilize and hatch the eggs and then place the un-fed natural fish back into the water where they were taken. This will boost the natural fertility rate of the eggs from around 5 percent to roughly 90 percent. Similar types of fish enhancement permits are already allowed by the department for scientific research or other educational purposes, but these purposes are limited and thus the data collection, fish enhancement projects and fish population information is limited. This bill allows the private sector and the department to work together in a responsible collaborative effort to increase the natural salmon populations and scientific data collection throughout the state.

HB 199 will be one more tool that can be used to ensure that we both today and in the future maximize our resources as stated in our state constitution, and thus benefit from Alaska's natural fish resources and feed our families.