



March 4, 2020

House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature

**RE: HB 80, An Act establishing the sport fishing hatchery facilities account;
establishing the sport fishing facility surcharge; and providing for an effective date.**

Dear Chair Tarr and Members of the Committee:

The Petersburg Economic Development Council supports passage of HB 80 to resume collection of a reduced sport fish surcharge for the purposes of sport fishing enhancement and maintenance of sport fish facilities.

Enactment of HB 80 would continue ADF&G's sport fish enhancement projects of nearly 7.2 million fish into 270 remote release throughout the State. It would also restore funding support to Crystal Lake Hatchery located in Petersburg. Crystal Lake is an important contributor to sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries in central Southeast Alaska. It is not often one can point to a single entity benefiting multiple user groups, but Crystal Lake does just that.

Locally, release of Chinook salmon and coho salmon has supported a growing sport fishing sector with several lodges, a very popular shore-based sport fishery, and a personal-use gillnet fishery near the hatchery. In addition, Crystal Lake's remote release program increases sport and commercial fishing opportunities in other areas, including Wrangell and Prince of Wales Island.

Along with the fishing opportunity come jobs at the hatchery, with the lodges, on charter boats, and on commercial fishing vessels. At a time when the state is losing jobs (-7.7% job growth) and population, it makes sense to continue investing in successful programs that have proven to boost our local economy.

We appreciate the committee taking up this legislation so early in the session and ask for members support in moving this legislation forward so it can be passed this session.

Sincerely

PEDC Board of Directors