

HB 54 Letters of Support – Index

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January 8, 2021

Representatives Geran Tarr
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: House Bill 32-LS0057\W "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing an effective date."

Dear Representative Tarr,

Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) is a private, non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Alaska, engaged in salmon enhancement work throughout the Cook Inlet Region. We are strong proponents of protecting and preserving salmon resources and the habitat these fish rely upon. The purpose of this letter is give our support to the above-referenced bill. This invasive species bill takes advantage of lessons learned in other states and regions—it allows the State of Alaska to take a coordinated effort through the establishment of a council to deal with harmful aquatic invasive species before they spread and cause ecological and/or economic impacts to our valuable resources, especially salmon.

Compared to other areas in the country, Alaska has the opportunity to eradicate aquatic invasive species threats such as the current elodea infestations found in different areas around the state. Elodea is the first invasive submerged aquatic weed discovered in Alaska waters and it was commonly used and sold in pet stores for use in aquariums. Discards of invasive plants and fish from aquariums in Alaska waters is the source of many invasive species introductions. A rapid response to eradicate an invasive species as close to its introduction is paramount. Elodea is a typical harmful invasive species because left unchecked, it will establish itself and dominate habitats, choking out native vegetation and fish, such as salmon. Many water bodies around the world, especially in Europe, have been decimated by elodea. Millions of dollars are spent each year just to keep water bodies from being choked off by elodea.

The swift and rapid response by a partnership of government and private organizations to this threat on the Kenai Peninsula showed that eradication can be successful and is much more cost effective than letting this threat grow into detrimental economic and ecologic impacts on our resources and landscapes. Unfortunately, due to permitting delays, an elodea infestation in Alexander Lake spread from 10 acres in 2014 to over 500 acres by 2016. The cost for treatment has expanded greatly (from less than \$15,000 to over \$1 million), funding the State of Alaska has had to seek through grants and other sources.

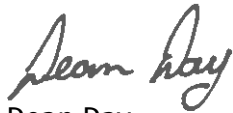
This two-year delay also allowed for the spread of elodea into neighboring lakes, putting more environments and resources at risk.

Recent research by Dr. Schwoerer (Institute of Social and Economic Research) showed that elodea can significantly threaten Alaska salmon. The odds for Alaska salmon in elodea-infested habitats to not exist beyond 20 years from now are 4 to 1. That is an 80% probability of extirpation. Dr. Schwoerer estimated that elodea could potentially cost the commercial sockeye salmon fishing industry \$159 million per year in damages should it go unmanaged. Given the results of this research, it is clear that Alaska needs a council to ensure permitting, planning, coordination, and resources are available to address existing and emerging threats.

We also strongly support the response fund provision in this bill. In an economic climate where funding is stretched thin, it only makes sense to establish and fund early detection and rapid response to address harmful aquatic invasive species in Alaska. Ultimately such efforts will save the State of Alaska millions if not billions of dollars, and maintain the thousands of job created by Alaska's robust salmon fisheries.

Thank you for sponsoring this bill, and please let us know if there is anything CIAA can do to further support this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Dean Day", written in a cursive style.

Dean Day
Executive Director



Representative Geran Tarr
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 13, 2021

Re: House Bill 32-LS0057\W “An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing an effective date.”

Dear Representative Tarr,

The Alaska Invasive Species Partnership is an informal statewide group of natural resource managers, ecologists, and interested individuals representing agencies, organizations, private industry, and members of the public. Our organization aims to raise awareness of the harmful impacts of invasive species as well as promote coordination and cooperation towards their management. We believe that the above-referenced bill, which would establish the Alaska Invasive Species Council and empower ADF&G with new authorities to proactively define, prevent, and address invasive species, represents an essential step toward facilitating and elevating the management actions needed to protect Alaska’s environment, economy, and human health from disruption from invasive species.

Alaskans depend on our natural resources for food, cultural practices, jobs, and recreation. However, our state is at a critical point with respect to many invasive species that threaten our rich natural resources and ways of life. An invasive species council with state commissioner level accountability and engagement by agencies, industry, members of the research and management community, and concerned stakeholders will enable planning and coordination to prevent and prepare for invasive species problems that are on our doorstep.

Prevention is the most cost effective management action and a critical approach to addressing harmful invasive species. At this time our borders are wide open to invasive species that are known to cause immense economic and environmental damage in other states and provinces. For example, trailered watercraft are being transported to Alaska from invasive species infested waterbodies as far away as Florida! Our relative geographic isolation will only protect us for so long. This bill takes advantage of painful lessons learned in other states and regions by preemptively identifying and managing for invasive species. ADF&G needs the authority to take active invasive species prevention measures such as inspecting, decontaminating, and quarantining watercraft that are infested with invasive species before such vectors can spread harmful invaders.

An invasive species council will also facilitate and promote rapid response when new invasions are detected. This will help Alaska avoid future situations such as the Alexander Lake *Elodea sp.* expansion where the invasive species problem became unnecessarily cumbersome and costly due to slow management response. The strategic plan required by this bill will ensure that the priorities and recommendations of the council are timely and appropriate.

We thank you for sponsorship of this bill. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide further assistance.

Best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Lisa Ka'aihue'.

Lisa Ka'aihue, Chair



Kodiak Soil & Water Conservation District

301 Research Court Room #245 Kodiak, Alaska 99615 (907) 486-5574

addressed to Representative Tarr and emailed to Thatcher Brouwer
<Thatcher.Brouwer@akleg.gov>

Alaska State House Representative Geran Tarr
Co-Chair, House Resources Committee
(907) 465-3424 Main Line
(907) 465-6007 Direct Line
www.repgerantarr.com

To Geran Tarr,

This letter is in reference to House Bill 32-LS0057\W

“An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game; relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing for an effective date.”

The Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District would like to voice our support for this Bill that would create an Alaska Invasive Species Council and establish an Invasive Species Response fund.

As one of the listed entities to be included on the newly formed Alaska Invasive Species Council we are pleased with the diverse representation of stakeholders in the council. This group of representatives has the potential to create comprehensive strategic plans for the state's invasive species concerns.

Alaska is in a position to prevent damage from invasive species if we act quickly and implement prevention measures. We support the Alaska Invasive Species Council's ability to make recommendations on coordinated interagency strategies and policies regarding transfer pathways, possession and use of listed invasive species. These steps can be key in preventing new infestations; and in the end saving time and resources for the state.

Our one concern with this bill is the housing within the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) rather than the land management entity of the state, the Division of Agriculture within the Department of Natural Resources. Agriculture is not a priority for the ADF&G and we are worried that will show in the distribution of invasive species management funds.

We thank you and your staff for your endless hours working on this bill and for your support of invasive species control in this State.

Sincerely,

Blythe

Programs Coordinator and Acting District Manager for:

Digitally signed by Blythe Brown
Date: 2021.01.14 16:45:02 -09'00'

Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors
Chris Flickinger, Chair; Barbara Zimmerman; Johnny Walker; Melissa Berns; and Scott Arndt

Danielle Butts
Programs Assistant



Homer Soil & Water CONSERVATION DISTRICT

432 E Pioneer Ave, Ste C
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-8177 ext. 5
info@homerswcd.org

January 15, 2021

Representative Geran Tarr
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: House Bill 32-LS0057\W "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing an effective date."

Dear Representative Tarr,

There are a multitude of invasive species at Alaska's doorstep, and the state requires a more robust management system for preventing and responding to harmful invasive species infestations. We are writing to express our support for House Bill 32-LS0057\W, which would establish the Alaska Invasive Species Council and empower the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) with new authorities to proactively define, prevent, and address invasive species in the state.

As the coordinating entity of the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (KP-CISMA), Homer Soil and Water Conservation District has facilitated development of strategic plans and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques in response to multiple invasive plant infestations across the Kenai Peninsula for the past 15 years. This includes *Elodea* eradication efforts in 6 infested waterbodies, Alaska's first known submerged freshwater invasive plant. *Elodea* is estimated to cost the commercial sockeye fishing industry \$100 million annually and threatens aviation-related recreation, should it become widespread across Alaska's freshwater systems (Schwoerer, T., et al. 2019. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-019-01295-7>). Invasive species are a significant threat to Alaska's salmon, wildlife, freshwater and marine resources, terrestrial ecosystems, local economies, recreation activities and livelihoods.

Through experience, we have learned a critical component of successful eradication is to act fast, while it is financially feasible to eradicate infestations before populations become unmanageable and costly to control. Even better, is to prevent the introduction of harmful invasive species in the first place. Managing vectors such as boats, vehicles and people crossing state boundaries through a variety of measures is critical and should be facilitated by a multi-stakeholder invasive species council, enhancing the state's ability to prevent costly economic and social impacts.

Thank you for your consideration of House Bill 32-LS0057\W, and we urge you to support this bill and protect Alaska from harmful invasive species.

Sincerely,

Chris Rainwater
Board Chair
Homer Soil & Water Conservation District

January 14, 2021
Representative Geran Tarr
State Capitol
Juneau Alaska 99801

Re: Support for the Invasive Species Bill that addresses the following: An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing for an effective date.

Dear Representative Tarr,

I serve as the invasive plants program coordinator at the Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District (SDSWCD). I offer this letter as an individual, based on my perspectives and experience gained while executing this role. I have observed the urgent need for greater leadership and coordination among local, state, and federal entities managing and preventing the introduction and spread of invasive species in Alaska. I am confident that the formulation of the Alaska Invasive Species Council under this Bill would help ADF&G gain new authority to proactively address and prevent invasive species, generate greater cooperative statewide action, and emphasize the need for other resource managers to take responsibility for reducing threats caused by invasive species.

SDSWCD is situated in one of Alaska's largest agricultural regions. Here, commercial hay and grain crops are produced. The Richardson and Alaska Highways are two major roads that carry traffic into the district from populated areas of Alaska and Canada. Both agriculture and roads are major vectors for the introduction of invasive plants, resulting in costly and damaging infestations that pose threats to our natural and agricultural resources. Invasive species must be actively managed to prevent and minimize damage. As a result, my district invests significantly each year to maintain an invasive plant program that monitors and manages invasive plants as well as educates the public about best management practices. My district is limited and only has the means to control invasive plants inside a certain margin. Unless we cultivate partnerships outside our district's boundaries, we will not be successful.

At SDSWCD we understand the importance of collaboration and work hard to demonstrate it. Every year we utilize our own resources to manage invasive species on roadsides in Delta Junction by performing as cooperators with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities under their Integrated Vegetation Management Plan. In 2019 we installed state-of-the-art seed cleaning equipment at the local farmer's co-op as a method to manage local product. Alaska's Weed Free Forage program was established by us in partnership with the Cooperative Extension Services and Division of Agriculture, and we organized participating entities to establish the Alaska Weed Free Committee to regulate the weed free program statewide. Additionally, we are often called upon by agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management, Natural Resources Conservation Services, The Department of Fish and Game, and regional military installations to provide resources relating to invasive plant management on their land. Although I do believe that our collaborative efforts can effectively enhance invasive species awareness and management, I do not believe a single district can combat the inevitable negative effects caused by invasive plants unless equal commitment measures are also met by other local, state, and federal organizations.

I am very grateful for the partnerships that my district has established so far, but I know more action is required. Alaska is threatened by invasive species and only with the help from local, state, and federal collaboration will it not perish. The Alaska Invasive Species Partnership is the vehicle that will drive us all in the right direction. It is the missing component that this state requires for this already overdue issue. With the passing of the Invasive Species Bill, Alaska has a chance to slow down the spread of invasive species and recover the already damaged, precious resources.

Thank you,
Summer Nay

Natural Resources Building
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STATE OF WASHINGTON
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE

January 19, 2020

The Honorable Representative Geran Tarr
State of Alaska Legislature
Room 126 Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Tarr:

On behalf of the Washington Invasive Species Council, I am writing to express strong support for House Bill number 54, which establishes the Alaska Invasive Species Council.

Alaska and Washington face similar issues, including prevention and rapid response to invasive species that have not yet become widely established in our jurisdictions, and long-term management of species that are more well established. For the protection of our individual, regional and national natural and cultural resources, economies, human health, and infrastructure; we believe it is imperative that each state have a strong invasive species strategy and coordinating body. The largely intact natural landscape and diverse natural resource economy of Alaska is extremely vulnerable to the often-irreparable impacts from invasive species.

The Washington State Legislature established the Washington Invasive Species Council in 2006 to develop and implement a strategic approach to prevent and control invasive species that threaten Washington's environment and economy. In our experience, a council can prevent millions in damage and loss by breaking through organizational silos and providing a forum for agencies, user groups, and stakeholders to collaborate, set policy, and share successful approaches. Every organization has a slightly different mission, but an invasive species council unites all, looks at the big picture, and fills in the gaps that individual agencies would be unable to cover.

When prevention fails, an invasive species council provides efficient and effective rapid response capabilities through working relationships established well before the emergency. Successfully containing and eradicating a new invasive species is often beyond the capability of a single organization. An invasive species council can leverage the knowledge and resources of the whole community to address a shared problem before substantial impacts and the need for recovery.

If we may show additional support or answer any questions, please contact me at justin.bush@rco.wa.gov or 360-902-3088.

Justin D. Bush, Executive Coordinator
Washington Invasive Species Council





FRIENDS OF
ALASKA
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges

National Friends of the Year 2010

www.alaskarefugefriends.org

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Jason Sodergren
Treasurer
jason@talga.com

January 22, 2021

Representative Geran Tarr
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: House Bill 32-LS0057W "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing an effective date."

Dear Representative Tarr,

We are writing in support of the House Bill 32-LS0057W, establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). Successful invasive species management requires a landscape approach with the cooperation of all landowners potentially affected to adopt common priorities and management strategies. This bill emphasizes collaboration by Federal, State, and various stakeholders. It creates a framework for the State to successfully develop management objectives, facilitate successful treatment plans, and coordinate efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

The mission of the Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges is to provide support to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the management of Alaska's 16 national wildlife refuges. As a partner with the USFWS, we have participated in efforts to monitor and inventory invasive species on refuge lands and support and assist with outreach efforts to increase awareness of invasive species. We have contributed financially to the cost of management efforts. We are well aware that a piecemeal effort is an ineffective approach to manage the threat of invasive species and sustain an intact ecosystem.

House Bill 32-LS0057W authorizes the ADF&G to coordinate and develop a strategic plan to minimize the economic and social impact of invasive species, to improve early detection and rapid response efforts to control the vectors in which new species may be introduced, and to focus on eradication efforts where feasible. This is a much-needed approach that will have state-wide benefits.

Sincerely,

David C. Raskin, Ph.D.
President

Alaska Maritime NWR

Alaska Peninsula NWR

Arctic NWR

Becharof NWR

Innoko NWR

Izembek NWR

Kanuti NWR

Kenai NWR

Kodiak NWR

Koyukuk NWR

Nowitna NWR

Selawik NWR

Tellin NWR

Togiak NWR

Yukon Delta NWR

Yukon Flats NWR



KENAI PENINSULA COOPERATIVE
**INVASIVE SPECIES
MANAGEMENT AREA**

Representative Geran Tarr
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 22, 2021

Re: House Bill 54 "An Act establishing the Alaska Invasive Species Council in the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G); relating to management of invasive species; relating to invasive species management decals; and providing an effective date."

The Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (KP-CISMA) is writing to express our support for House Bill 54, which would establish the Alaska Invasive Species Council, empower the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to address invasive species issues, and establish a fund for invasive species rapid response throughout the state.

The KP-CISMA has a strong history of collaboratively implementing *Early Detection and Rapid Response* of non-native, invasive species throughout the Kenai Peninsula. Since our inception as a Cooperative Weed Management Area in 2003, we have worked diligently to reduce the negative effects of invasive plants within the region, maintaining strategic management plans and high-priority non-native plant lists. With the increased threats posed by invasive species of all taxa, the partnership has recently broadened our scope to a CISMA, and continues to identify priorities and contribute to management plans for the most harmful invasive species that threaten Alaska's ecosystem, wildlife, and local economies. We think that establishment of an Alaska Invasive Species Council and providing the ADF&G with authority to take preventative actions will provide tools that are needed to improve coordination between state partners and develop state-wide invasive species prevention practices.

Prevention and rapid response to eradicate new infestations are the most cost efficient and effective ways to manage invasive species. The KP-CISMA has actively treated and eradicated the invasive aquatic plant *Elodea* on the Kenai Peninsula from six lakes since 2014. This was only possible because of the early detection of these populations and the partnership's ability to treat them quickly, but at a high monetary cost. *Elodea* is Alaska's first known submerged freshwater invasive plant and is widely considered to be a threat to Alaska's salmon and freshwater resources with significant ecological and economic consequences. Based on modeling by the UAA Institute of Social and Economic Research, we know that if *elodea* were to spread across Alaska, it would likely cost the commercial sockeye fishing industry \$100 million per year in lost revenue (2019 Schwoerer et al). This is just one of many harmful invasive species that pose high risk of economic and social costs.

We believe that House Bill 54 provides important first steps in establishing robust prevention measures, enabling a cost-effective strategy to stop the spread and introduction of invasive species into Alaska. The KP-CISMA strongly supports this effort and appreciates your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine Schake

Coordinator, Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (KP-CISMA)



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

February 26, 2021

Representative Geran Tarr
State Capitol Room 126
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: Invasive Species Rapid Response

Dear Representative Tarr,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. We recognize the economic value of Alaska's fisheries and we are dedicated to protecting these fisheries from all threats including the negative impact of invasive species.

Invasive species can alter both marine and freshwater habitats, compete with native fish stocks for food and territory, change predator/prey relationships, reduce natural productivity, and negatively affect harvest opportunity for all Alaskans who rely on our fishery resource for food and income.

Early detection of new introductions or expansion of previously introduced organisms speeds response to the negative impact of an invasive species and is a key to successful invasive species control or eradication. Once firmly established, control or eradication of invasive species can be challenging and costly. Thus, we believe early detection and rapid response are essential to protecting Alaska's fishery resource from the negative impact of invasive species.

UFA is aware the activities with the potential to introduce invasive species and those activities needed to manage the impact of invasive species are often overseen by different agencies. Rapid and effective coordination between Federal, State, and local agencies is also key to successful management actions that prevent the introduction, spread, and negative impact of invasive species to our fishery resources.

We appreciate efforts by the legislature and the Federal, State and local agencies that oversee potential invasive species introduction and control to address this important threat to Alaska's fisheries. We look forward to gaining a greater understanding of HB 54.

Regards,

Matt Alward
President

Frances H. Leach
Executive Director



Pacific NorthWest Economic Region

**2020 - 2021
PNWER Executive
Committee***

Sen. Mike Cuffe
Montana
President

Richard Gotfried, MLA
Alberta
Vice President

Rick Glumac, MLA
British Columbia
Vice President

Sen. Chuck Winder
Idaho
Vice President

Rep. Chris Tuck
Alaska

Paolo Gallina, MLA
Yukon

Colin Smith
APEGBC
Private Sector Co-Chair

Dan Kirschner
Northwest Gas Assoc.
Private Sector Co-Chair

March 3, 2021

The Honorable Representative Geran Tarr
State of Alaska Legislature
Room 126 Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Tarr,

On behalf of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, we are writing to express strong support for House Bill number 54, which establishes the Alaska Invasive Species Council. The State of Alaska, like all PNWER jurisdictions face similar issues related to invasive species, including prevention and rapid response to outbreaks of invasive species that have not yet become widely established in our jurisdictions. Additionally, councils can help with the long-term management of invasive species that are more well established.

PNWER believes it is imperative that each state, province and territory have a strong invasive species strategy and coordinating body. The councils that have been established in PNWER states, provinces and territories have an important role in the prevention and control of invasive species that threaten the region's environment and economy. PNWER supports the development of an Alaska Invasive Species Council as essential to efficient and effective management of invasive species in the state.

We are happy to answer any questions and provide testimony on the importance of the council in the region. Please feel free to contact us at Matt.Morrison@pnwer.org or 206-443-7723 if you have any questions.

*Partial listing

Senator Mike Cuffe
PNWER President 2020-2021
Montana State Legislature

Matt Morrison
Chief Executive Officer
PNWER



"The mission of the Council is to represent the citizens of Cook Inlet in promoting environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in Cook Inlet."

Members

5 March 2021

Tourism Group

Representative Geran Tarr
State Capitol Room 126
Juneau AK, 99801

Alaska Native Group

RE: HB54: Alaska Invasive Species Council and Invasive Species Response Fund

Environmental Group

Dear Representative Tarr,

Recreational Group

This letter is in support of HB 54 that would establish an Alaska Invasive Species Council within the Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to facilitate their efforts and those of the Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), the Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF), and other natural resource-related governmental entities operating in the state to manage invasive species in Alaska.

Aquaculture Associations

The Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council (CIRCAC) is a citizen oversight council for oil industry operations in the Cook Inlet region, established by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA 90). Our organization represents thirteen local governments and interest groups in the Cook Inlet area to promote environmentally safe marine transportation and oil facility operations in the Inlet. OPA 90 identified a wide range of tasks for CIRCAC, one of which is to devise and manage a comprehensive monitoring program to monitor the environmental impacts of the oil industry operations in Cook Inlet. We have identified numerous risks and potential impacts to the Cook Inlet waterbody and its resources, including the introduction of invasive species via ballast water or attached to ship hulls or the legs of new drill rigs.

Fishing Organizations

City of Kodiak

City of Kenai

City of Seldovia

City of Homer

An Alaska Invasive Species Council and Invasive Species Response Fund will provide Alaska with the structure necessary to coordinate activities that prevent introductions of and the quick and effective response to the highest invasive species threats. Investment in early detection and rapid response could save millions of dollars to Alaskans over time. As noted in the 2002 Alaska Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plan, hard lessons in other areas of the U.S. have shown invasive species can "change ecosystems by altering habitat composition, increasing wildfire risk, competing with native species for food and territory, changing existing predator/prey relationships, reducing productivity, or otherwise disrupting natural habitat functions. In doing so, invasive species pose one of the greatest threats to biological diversity."

Kodiak Island Borough

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Prevention is also key to a successful invasive species management plan. Once firmly established, it can be nearly impossible to eradicate highly invasive species, some of which have already reached Alaska but have not yet become entrenched. Early detections of new introductions or expansions of previously introduced organisms can speed response for controlling or eradicating the threat. We've noted that activities with the potential to introduce invasive species are often overseen by one agency, while the resources at risk are managed by a different agency. HB 54 would formalize inter-agency coordination and

Municipality of Anchorage

access to funds to facilitate sharing of plans, identifying risks, implementing prevention and mitigation measures, deploying response resources, and monitoring impacts; all key to successful management actions that prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species.

Based on known risks to resources important to Alaskans, we recommend that specific agencies within several of the federal Departments be provided ex-officios seats so that agencies that oversee activities with known invasive species risks are represented, as well as those agencies responsible for managing resources at risk. We recommend participation by three agencies within the Department of Interior: the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. We also recommend that HB 54 specifically identifies participation by the National Marine Fisheries Service within the Department of Commerce.

We appreciate this opportunity to support HB 54. Its broad stakeholder representation on the Council, along with the federal, state, and tribal governments, will ensure that discussions and decisions reflect the widest range of concerns and experience when setting priorities in the biennial five-year strategic plan. Please contact me at munger@circac.org or at the number below if you have questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Munger', is placed above the printed name.

Michael Munger
Executive Director