



February 28, 2026

HB 253 FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT LOAN PROGRAM – SEAS opposition

The Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) is a commercial fishing advocacy group made up of people who support and participate in the salmon fishery in southeast Alaska using purse seine gear. SEAS was formed in Ketchikan in 1968 by fishermen. Its goal is to help preserve a fishery that has been happening in southeast Alaska since the early 1900's. SEAS members live and work in southeast Alaska. Approximately 75% of active SE AK purse seine fishermen (200) are paying members of SEAS.

SEAS advocates for the seine fishery in a variety of areas including Alaska Board of Fisheries, Pacific Salmon Treaty, Regional and PNP Aquaculture Associations, Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game meetings, UFA, court proceedings, AK legislation and environmental concerns. Anything affecting the southeast salmon fisheries – SEAS is watching, ready to make fishermen's voices heard.

Personally, I have lived in Ketchikan AK from 1978 to present. I worked for the ADF&G FRED Division from 1978 through 1981. From 1981 through 1985 I was the Assistant Area Management Biologist for Commercial Fisheries. From 1986 through 2006 I was the Commercial Fisheries Area Management Biologist for the southern Southeast Management districts. Those fisheries included salmon purse seine and gillnet fisheries, herring sac roe fisheries, shellfish fisheries, dive fisheries, and more. From 1986 through 2006 I was a member of the Alaskan Pacific Salmon Treaty negotiating team. From 2007 through 2008 I contracted with the State to finish negotiations for the Pacific Salmon Treaty.

From 2007 through 2022 I was the Executive Director of the Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA).

Starting in 2022 through present I have been the Executive Director of the Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS).

SEAS is writing in opposition HB 253

SEAS opposes this Bill for the following reasons.

- MIC fisheries have never paid into the 3% Salmon Enhancement Tax nor the State's 3% Fisheries Tax, foundation of the Alaskan permitted hatchery program and the foundation of the loan program.

- The loan fund is used by permitted Alaskan hatcheries. This fund has been and will continue to be vital to their success. HB 253, as written, would include only Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) hatchery program.
- Allowing the non-permitted Metlakatla Indian Community (MIC) hatchery to use this fund would mean less money for permitted Alaskan hatcheries.
- MIC is actively suing against the State. MIC is saying their fishermen should have the right to fish in State waters of Southern Southeast Alaska without CFEC permits.
 - MIC wrote in one of its briefings the following:
 - IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT DISTRICT OF ALASKA
Case No.: 5:20-cv-00008-SLG METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY, a Federally Recognized Indian Tribe, Plaintiff
“The Reserve is surrounded on all sides by State-managed fishing areas, making the Community’s fisheries extremely vulnerable to State-managed fisheries that intercept fish returning to the exclusive zone. At times, State-managed fisheries have intercepted salmon that would otherwise be passing through Reserve waters, unfairly denying the Community sufficient access to salmon.” (Direct statement from MIC filing)
 - So, producing more MIC fish that will be harvested in State waters will only further that argument.
- BoF Prop 170 – reduce hatchery fish. This has been debated at recent Board of Fish meetings and will once again be in front of the BoF during the Statewide Anchorage meeting in mid-March 2026.
 - *PROPOSAL 170 5 AAC 40.XXX New Regulation. Reduce the permitted egg take level of each hatchery permit containing pink and chum salmon by 25% of the current permitted capacity for those species.*
- Why produce more hatchery produced chums with the current anti-hatchery sentiment in some areas of AK?

As far as SEAS can determine there has been limited or no reach-out to SSRAA, ADF&G, SEAS, or other fishing groups from the sponsor of this Bill.

So why should the State “reward” MIC hatchery with long term low interest loans? It is not in the interest of the State and not in the interest of fishing groups.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,



Phil Doherty
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