

From: [Rod Arno](#)
To: [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB125 - AOC Opposition
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 8:29:10 AM

Chair Senator Kelly Merrick and CRA Committee members,

The Alaska Outdoor Council opposes HB125, passage of the bill would not achieve the sponsors stated goal for the necessity for balance in allocating public resource, fish, to Alaskans. HB125 does not account for differences in state subsistence users under AS 16.05.258 and Personal Use fishing as defined in AS 16.05.940(27). Balance is not a concession - it's necessary.

Like the Sponsor of HB125 the Alaska Outdoor Council represents thousands of Alaskans ,who choose to gather their own food source of fish, they are well aware that fish harvest opportunities are being restricted in state regulations.

The Alaska Outdoor Council disagrees with the Sponsor's premise that the problem of low fish gathering opportunity is caused by action or in action by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Declining runs attributed to increasing North Pacific ocean temperatures and related ecosystem shifts are beyond the regulatory authority of the Alaska Board of Fisheries. A review of numerous Alaska Board of Fisheries (Board) actions taken at statewide meeting over the last decade are proof that the Board, and Alaska Department of Fish & Game, are engaged with local users and bureaucratic agencies to try and maintain sufficient harvestable surplus for all users. AS 16.05.251(d) makes it clear in state subsistence law, AS16.05.258. **Subsistence fisheries allocation is not on the table when the Board is deliberating between fish harvest allocation by; commercial fishing, sport fishing, guided sport, and Personal use fishing.** Subsistence fishing under state law is a priority use. More frequent closures to opportunities to gather fish will continue to occur until fish stocks rebound, that's the authority granted to the Board by the Alaska Legislature in AS 16.05.251. Dedicated seats on Alaska's Board of Fisheries won't change the harvestable surplus of fish available. Dedicated seats among; subsistence fishing, commercial fishing, sport fishing, and scientific is not balanced representation of those who harvest fish in Alaska. The Alaska Legislature created the Alaska Board of Fisheries and gave the Board specific statutory directions in AS 16.05.251((a)(6) to classify personal use fish and subsistence fish. They are not the same. Subsistence fish are not allocated by the Alaska Board of Fisheries, AS 16.05.251(d), personal use fish are.

Times of low fish abundance are not favorable to Alaskan individual fish gathers. The Alaska Outdoor Council will continue to support the Alaska Board of Fisheries process as the Board adopts to changing fish returns to Alaska waters. Dedicated seats on the Board would only complicate the divisiveness between different fish user groups at this point in the Board's process.

HB 125 risks shifting the Board of Fisheries away from its current structure—designed to act in the best interest of the resource as a whole—toward a user-group-based framework that may prioritize representation over sound biological and management decisions.

Thanks to the Senate CRA Committee for considering the Alaska Outdoor Council comments on HB125 Membership of the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Rod Arno
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Sent from Rod Arno's iPhone.