

2025 SESSION OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

OFFERED IN: The House Finance Subcommittee for the Department of Fish and Game

TO: HB 53

OFFERED BY: Representative Louise Stutes

FISCAL YEAR: FY26

DEPARTMENT: Department of Fish and Game

APPROPRIATION: Commercial Fisheries

ALLOCATION: Westward Region Fisheries Management

ADD: N/A

DELETE: \$500,000, funding source, Designated General Funds, fund code, 1109 Test Fish.

POSITIONS: N/A

EXPLANATION:

Considering fishery closures, species abundance concerns, and limited openings for Alaskan fishermen hollow authority for Test Fisheries receipts is being reduced, which means that the FY26 Adjusted Base for the Western Region will be \$500,000 above the FY25 Enacted Budget and \$500,000 below the Governor's FY26 requested budget

A decline in Bristol Bay Crab (BBRKC) abundance led to the closure of the fishery in 2021, and it remained until 2024. At which time the fishery reopened at limited allowable catch levels for fishermen. Closure and limited quotas does not preclude the annual test fish recovery, however it is foreseeable that test fishery removals will no longer be practical at current levels if stocks decline. Shifting test fish cost recovery to Bering Sea snow crab is also not viable. The snow crab stock unexpectedly collapsed in 2020 and after a two-year closure the fishery was reopened in the 2024-2025 season based on modest sign of recovery.

Test Fish cost recovery should not occur in declining fisheries that are closed or limited to commercial, sport and subsistence fisheries.

2025 SESSION OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL

OFFERED IN: The House Finance Subcommittee for the Department of Fish and Game

TO: HB 53 / HB 55

OFFERED BY: Representative Sarah Vance

FISCAL YEAR: 2026

DEPARTMENT: Fish and Game
APPROPRIATION: Commercial Fisheries
ALLOCATION: Central Region Fisheries Management

EXPLANATION: Amend the program titled the “Coho Salmon Genetic Testing of Upper Cook Inlet Commercial Harvest” to be “Coho and Sockeye Salmon Testing of Upper and Lower Cook Inlet Commercial Harvest.” The program should include contracting a test boat for in-season management of Sockeye.”