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House Bill 31- Version A Sponsor Statement (Prepared 1.17.25)

"An Act relating to the registration of commercial vessels; and relating to the derelict vessel prevention program fund"

House Bill 31 exempts active commercial fishing vessels from duplicative registration requirements created by the passage of SB 92, "the derelict vessel bill," in 2018.

Specifically, the bill removes the requirement for U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) documented vessels with a current Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) license to register every three years with the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV).

Prior to the passage of SB 92, USCG documented vessels were exempt from DMV registration; however, that exemption was repealed by the bill and as a result, documented vessels now must register with the DMV.

The rationale for this requirement was to provide the State and local municipalities with a state-maintained database of who owns and operates vessels in Alaskan waters, as well as how to contact those individuals.

However, the database the CFEC maintains for commercial fishing vessels was overlooked. Active commercial fishing vessel owners must renew their vessel license annually with the CFEC and the commission provides the necessary contact information in a publicly accessible, state database.

Alaska's commercial fishing fleet is the backbone of one of our state's most vital industries. We should not require those vessels to register every three years with the DMV, at additional expense, only to provide information that the State already has through the vessel's annual license renewal process.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Matt Gruening, at 465-3271 or matt.gruening@akleg.gov.