



ALASKA SALMON ALLIANCE

110 N. Willow St. #108

PO Box 586 Kenai, AK 99611

[www.aksalmonalliance.org](http://www.aksalmonalliance.org)

Email: [info@aksalmonalliance.org](mailto:info@aksalmonalliance.org)

**March 5, 2025**

Representative Louise Stutes  
Chair, House Fisheries Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**Subject: Support for House Bill 117**

**Dear Representative Stutes and Members of the Fisheries Committee,**

The Alaska Salmon Alliance is a nonprofit organization comprised of commercial seafood processors, allied businesses, and fishermen. We focus on public education and promoting the value of scientifically based salmon management to preserve habitats and create predictable harvests for all salmon. Our goal is to create long-term economic opportunities and benefits for Alaska's coastal communities for future generations.

We would like to comment on HB 117. Although setnetting varies across the state, one common aspect is that family operations work together as cooperatives. It is unfortunate that there is a need to legislate a practice based on common sense and one that has been in place for decades.

One reason for this cooperative structure is to enable extended family units to work together, share expenses, and reduce financial risk. It also provides the next generation with a more economical way into the fishery, teaches a strong work ethic, and strengthens family dynamics. Often, these cooperatives start small and expand as the family grows, allowing younger generations to take on more active roles and continue fishing alongside parents and sometimes even grandparents if desired.

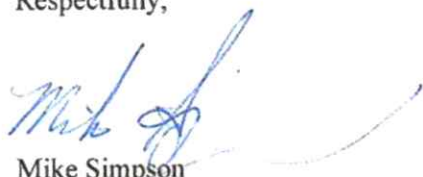
The ability to commingle fish from multiple permit holders provides both safety and efficiency. Whether delivering fish by skiff in rough water or bringing fish to the beach to be transported in totes via truck, it is impractical to deliver multiple small boat loads or partially filled totes. Ultimately, the fish are counted and weighed with those numbers being given by statistical area to the Department of Fish and Game.

Each setnet area already has effective controls in place, including restrictions on the number of permits an individual may hold, limits on gear quantity, required spacing between nets, and designated fishing areas. While ten-permit operations do exist, they are rare and typically involve extended family units. Introducing an arbitrary cap of ten permits per cooperative is unnecessary and would impose unwarranted micromanagement on operations that are already well-regulated under existing rules.

It is important to recognize the operational differences among setnetters, as running a successful operation involves extensive responsibilities beyond harvesting fish. Tasks such as net and mechanical maintenance, transportation logistics, and crew support—including providing food and housing—are integral to daily operations. The requirement that a permit holder be "present at all times and actively engaged in the operation" must therefore be clearly defined. In practice, permit holders remain consistently onsite or at the upland base of operations whenever their nets are active. While most are actively harvesting fish, there are inevitably situations—such as equipment failures or logistical issues—where being onshore is essential to maintaining overall operational efficiency. Permit holders always have specific responsibilities and actively contribute to the broader success of the fishing operation, even when not directly picking fish.

To be clear, we support HB 117 in clarifying a process that has been used for decades. Our recommendation is to keep it simple—avoid unnecessary complications that lead to interpretation issues and potential problems. Allow cooperatives to operate as they have traditionally done.

Respectfully,



Mike Simpson  
President  
Alaska Salmon Alliance



Norm Darch  
Executive Director  
Alaska Salmon alliance