

## HCR1 – Letters of Support

We operate a long-range charter service in Southeast AK that includes fishing as part of our guest experience. Recognizing that fisheries are a limited resource, it may be necessary to limit participation in order to maintain viable sustainable businesses associated with sportfishing in Southeast. Therefore, we support HCR No. 1.

We hope that the Task Force would consider the following points in designing a system that might curtail the size of the sportfishing sector in Southeast.

-Only individuals with direct involvement in sportfish businesses should be allowed to own a limited entry permit that may be traded or sold. This is a flaw in the federal CHP program that has contributed to price escalation of these permits

-Historical participation in the sector should be recognized to protect those who have invested in, and made a living from sportfish businesses.

-Provisions to protect existing small operators should be in place so as to prevent the monopolization of the sector by deep pocketed operators such as cruise ship companies, corporations, or large fishing lodges.

Much of the value in Southeast sportfishing business is directly related to the uniqueness and diversity offered by small lodges, guides, and vessel operators. We hope the Task Force does what it can to protect the character of the business by recognizing these points, among others, in setting out a framework for a sustainable sportfish sector.

Equinox

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Alaska State House of Representatives

House Fisheries Committee

March 11, 2025

To whom it may concern,

My name is James Kearns and I live in Gustavus, Alaska. I have operated a charterboat business in the Gustavus/Glacier Bay area for over 30 years. There has been a definite increase in the number of charter boat operations over those many years. So I am writing to support House Concurrent Resolution 1 (HCR1)

To provide for a Joint Legislative Task Force on Sport Fishing Service Providers in SE Alaska.

Certainly one of the most significant increases are from non-resident owners of sportfishing lodges and resorts. So I think one of the areas to focus on is to limit the number of large or well financed businesses or entities from out of state that build or buy sportfishing service provider operations thus making it harder for a local resident individual or business to get into the business. Similarly I believe we should limit non-resident commercial fishery entities that take away local and resident opportunities to work in the fisheries. Limited entry with a resident focus!

I would also suggest that this body support proposals to the NPFMC that would eliminate different halibut rules for guided and unguided recreational halibut fishermen.

Recreational halibut fishermen in Alaska need to have an allocation that is separate from the commercial fishery. And all recreational halibut fishermen should participate equally in halibut resource protection.

Sincerely,

James Kearns

Fairweather Adventures at Glacier Bay

Gustavus, AK 99826

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Dear members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I am writing to express my support for the formation of a task force to address a Limited Entry Program for the charter fishing industry in Southeast Alaska.

My name is Taiga Bell. I live in Elfin Cove with my family. It's a tiny town of about 20 local residents that grows to a few hundred people in the spring as commercial and charter

fishermen and women arrive for the fishing season. Elfin Cove is located in Cross Sound on the outer coast of northern southeast Alaska, about 80 miles west of Juneau. For the first 25 years of my life, I commercial fished with my parents and on other boats in the area catching salmon, halibut and shrimp. In 2007 I bought my own boat. Every year since I've fished on the rich waters of Southeast Alaska. I've seen the charter industry in Elfin Cove grow first hand from a hand full of boats, when I was a kid, to over 50 boats a day loaded with guest. I've watched as year after year the charter lodges in town, owned by extremely rich people from the lower 48 made so much money they had to reinvest it into their businesses, (for tax reasons), in the form of more boats more housing and more guides and staff. The town has suffered as family homes were bought up to house the workers at the lodges. When I was a kid there were 30 kids running and playing on the boardwalk. Now my kids and one other family are all that is left.

What I'm trying to convey is that the charter businesses in Elfin Cove have grown considerably in my lifetime and continue to do so at an alarming rate. The charter operations out of Elfin Cove catch an incredible number of fish that are mostly sent to freezers down south. The huge impact they are having on the fishing around Cross Sound is obvious to anyone who has been fishing in the area. I care about the salmon, halibut, and rockfish. I want my kids to grow up in a place where the fish are abundant and thriving. I watch the unhindered growth of the charter fleet with sadness, because it seems like ADFG and the Alaska Legislature has turned a blind eye to this huge problem. I hope that the truth of what has been happening in my town is seen and understood.

If the charter fleet was regulated by a limited entry program, like the commercial fishing industry, it would be a step in the right direction to slow this snowball effect of more and more boats pouring in and out of town, and limit the number of fish that are being caught in the area. Please understand that this problem is out of control and has been for years. Please form a task force to figure out how to fairly limit the number of boats in the southeast charter fleet for the future of Alaskan fishing before it's too late.

Sincerely, Taiga Bell

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To: Members of the Alaska State Legislature  
From: Theresa Weiser (Owner) Alaska Premier Charters, Inc. in Sitka, Alaska  
Re: I SUPPORT HCR-1

Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I have been a lodge owner and operator in the saltwater guided sportfishing industry in Sitka, Alaska since 1990, fishing for King Salmon, Halibut, Lingcod, Rockfish and Sablefish. I have seen the guided charter sportfishing industry moderately grow and expand over the years as more and more non-resident folks have made SE Alaska their sportfishing destination. We have also seen significant growth of non-guided fishing entities, particularly during the last four years competing for these same species. Both guided and unguided increased fishing effort over the years has created an imbalance between the number of sport fishing service providers and angler allocations. Available resources are being more than fully utilized!

As a result, the charter industry has been specifically targeted with increasingly restrictive regulations each year, including the future in-season disruptive management for King Salmon, now approved by the Board of Fish in the ADFG toolbox. Each spring we wait for announcements of the upcoming regulations, and we wonder what bad news we will have to tell our clients; and what next will be snipped away this season! And when the new regulations are announced, each year there is ALWAYS something more snipped away – every year! Examples are reduced bag limits, reduced annual limits; fish sizes reduced, slot limits and reverse slots both become more restrictive, closures for some species – for part of or for all of a season; day of the week closures for part of a season - has now become a day of the week closure for the full season - first time this year! We say to ourselves: “They put another nail in the coffin!” And it is usually more than one nail going into the coffin! When does this stop? As it now stands, the unpredictability of the regulations each season creates uncertainty and instability for our businesses as we keep trying to market what has become less and less opportunity to attract clients.

This increased fishing activity over the years, combined with dwindling fish stocks of several species, has resulted in harvest opportunity for our guided fishing clients being

significantly less and is now affecting the marketability of trips. If these restrictions continue to get worse and worse each year, and nothing is done to stabilize our industry, existing and future businesses will likely experience economic distress and could stop being viable.

The guided sportfishing industry (lodges) has been a strong continuous economic contributor for coastal communities over the years. The economic data has proven this. Reducing opportunities each year has now put the guided sportfishing industry (lodges) at risk. We all have large economic investments in our vessels and lodge businesses! It is very scary to see our sport service industry specifically being targeted and penalized. Something must change. Either increase the allocations for sport fishing resources, which we know is next to impossible! Or effectively implement a limited entry program for our industry - such as has been done for every other fully utilized fishery in Alaska over the years!

I support HCR 1 in the hopes of putting some controls on the unguided sportfishing services, and stabilize our guided sport fisheries, by creating a controlled entry system for the purposes of resource conservation and to prevent economic distress for all our sportfishing lodge businesses and those that depend on guided sportfishing services for a livelihood. *Plus, we want to keep access to the resources viable to all the public that choose to sport fish from charter boats as their way to put amazing seafood on their tables, while making forever memories with their families and friends. As I always say to our guests: "Nobody can take away your memories ever!"*

Thank you,

***Theresa Weiser***

Owner / Alaska Premier Charters, Inc.

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Travis Peterson  
Alaska Charter Service LLC  
Sitka, AK 99835

Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,  
Juneau, Alaska.

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Concurrent Resolution No. 1, which aims to establish the Joint Legislative Task Force on Sport Fishing Service Providers in Southeast Alaska. The resolution is crucial to ensuring sustainable growth and long-term stability within the sport fishing industry, particularly in Southeast Alaska.

As highlighted in the resolution, the sport fishing service industry makes significant economic contributions to the state, serving countless anglers and generating millions of dollars annually. However, without proper management, the ongoing growth of this industry poses potential risks, including diminished economic viability and heightened resource competition. These issues need timely attention to safeguard both the industry's future and the region's fishery resources.

Southeast Alaska hosts a significant concentration of sport fishing service providers. Therefore, the challenges stemming from unregulated growth are likely to be more acute here compared to other regions of the state. The establishment of a task force would provide an invaluable platform to address existing and emerging concerns, ensuring that all stakeholders, from sport fishing operators to local communities, can collaborate towards constructive solutions.

In conclusion, the adoption of House Concurrent Resolution No. 1 will help balance the needs of sport fishing service providers and other fishery resource user groups, while protecting the precious aquatic resources of Southeast Alaska. I urge you, members of the legislature, to support this resolution for the benefit of Alaska's economy, natural resources, and communities.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint on this vital matter.

Sincerely,

Travis Peterson

## Alaska Charter Service

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This is Joel Martin I own and operate a self guided boat operation in Sitka Alaska named Fish Baranof. We operate 12 self guided rental boats. I believe there needs to be a moratorium put on charter boats and rental boats in our area. This will help reduce the chance of going over allocation on certain fisheries, including King salmon we cannot afford an early season, shut down due to over fishing . I believe if we put a limit on the boat numbers, we will ensure operations to continue at least until July 1 every year thank you for your consideration.

Joel Martin

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