

First Creek Fisheries

Ekuk Beach, AK

House Special Committee on Fisheries

Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol Building

Juneau, AK

Subject: Letter of Support for HB 117 with Recommended Amendments

Dear Members of the House Special Committee on Fisheries,

First Creek Fisheries and the undersigned Ekuk set netters support **HB 117**, introducing cooperative setnetting opportunities to increase efficiency and flexibility for Alaska's commercial set gillnet fishermen. This bill acknowledges the challenges of operating in an unpredictable fishery and provides a pathway for small-scale fishermen to pool resources, improve safety, and streamline operations.

We believe HB 117 is a step in the right direction, and we recommend the following amendments to ensure sustainable access, adherence to the owner-operator intent of limited entry, and transparent financial accountability:

Recommended Amendments**1. Reduce Co-op Permit Cap from 10 to 3-5**

- A 10-permit co-op risks excessive consolidation, which could reduce access for independent fishermen and accelerate the loss of locally-held permits.
- A 3-5 permit co-op size ensures flexibility for family-based and small-scale operations while discouraging excessive consolidation.

2. Clarify Catch Accounting & Per-Permit Payment in Regulation

- Regulations should require clear tracking of fish landed per permit to maintain transparency and catch accounting.
- Payment should be attributed to individual permit holders unless otherwise specified in writing by the permit holder.

HB 117 must balance flexibility with safeguards against unintended consequences, including permit hoarding and reduced local access. By incorporating these amendments, the bill can align regulation with the practical needs of set-net operations while ensuring fairness, accountability, and long-term sustainability.

We appreciate your attention to this issue and encourage the committee to advance HB 117 with these key improvements.

Sincerely,

Christine O'Connor

John O'Connor

Jamie O'Connor

Margot Stroop

Dayle Ferry

Grayson Sanborn

Robert Sanborn

Sonja Rootvik Ewing

Avi Friedman

Norris Friedman

Celia Friedman

Warren Libby

John Bouker Sr. and Family (7 permits)