

HB 130 passed the House last spring on a nearly unanimous vote, and is now being considered in the Senate. On Friday February 2 the Senate Resources Committee will hold a public hearing on the bill.

If passed, HB 130 will:

1. Correct typographical errors in the legal descriptions made in the original 1970's statutes for Port Moller, Egegik and Pilot Point critical habitat areas (all in Bristol Bay on the Alaska Peninsula);
2. Add relatively small areas within the external boundary that were presumably inadvertently omitted from Izembek, Cape Newenham and Palmer Hay Flats state game refuges; and Fox River Flats and Kachemak Bay critical habitat areas; and
3. Add approximately 1,400 acres of wetlands to the Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area (Gustavus) that were purchased by The Nature Conservancy and donated to the state for purposes of habitat conservation and adding to the CHA.

My hope is to see this bill passed out of the Senate Resources Committee as it is and then on to a floor vote.

Thank you,
Connie Markis
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Senate Resources Committee -

I am writing in support of HB 130, regarding the boundaries of several Alaska State Game Refuges and Critical Habitat Areas. These are all existing State Game Refuges and Critical Habitats, and this legislation is being sponsored by the Governor. HB 130 is necessary to correct mistakes in previous legal descriptions and clean up/adjust some specific boundaries. It is important for you to approve this bill as it will:

- 1) Correct typographical errors in the legal descriptions made in the original 1970's statutes for Port Moller, Egegik and Pilot Point critical habitat areas (all in Bristol Bay on the Alaska Peninsula);
2. Add relatively small areas within the external boundary that were presumably inadvertently omitted from Izembek, Cape Newenham and Palmer Hay Flats state game refuges; and Fox River Flats and Kachemak Bay critical habitat areas; and
3. Add approximately 1,400 acres of wetlands to the Dude Creek Critical Habitat Area (Gustavus) that were purchased by The Nature Conservancy and donated to the state for purposes of habitat conservation and as an addition to the existing Critical Habitat Area.

In this time of a state budget deficit, It is important to note that the state's analysis shows there will be zero fiscal impact to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (the agency charged with managing these areas) due to passage of this bill. Management of the additional or shifted lands falls within the normal scope of their work, and may represent increased efficiency for the Department. In fact, the benefits provided by this bill seem likely to result in some administrative cost savings as the bill is intended to:

"correct errors and properly describe areas intended for habitat protection; eliminate the confusing patchwork of land status within these refuges and critical habitat areas; create contiguous, inclusive boundaries that better reflect the original legislative intent of the designations; remove lands inadvertently included in critical habitat areas that were not appropriate for habitat protections, and eliminate permitting requirements for such lands; and clarify management and enforcement of the applicable statutes and regulations governing the subject special areas."

I also expect that you will affirm the existing purposes of our State Game Refuges and Critical Habitat Areas. Those provide for the fair and equitable use of these areas while ensuring the fish and wildlife resources they support will be sustained for future generations of Alaskans.

Thank you for your attention to my comments.

Sincerely,

Ann Rappoport

Anchorage, AK 99516