



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

**Department of Public Safety**  
DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS  
Office of the Director

5700 East Tudor Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-1225  
Main: 907.269.5509

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robin Burke  
Chair, House Resources Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 108  
Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Maxine Dibert  
Chair, House Resources Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 126  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Burke and Dibert:

The Department of Public Safety (DPS) was available to the House Resources Committee for questions related to House Bill 117 on March 24, 2025. Below are responses to the questions raised during this hearing.

**1. Representative Saddler requested information regarding the “change in the interpretation” of statute that led the introduction of House Bill 117.**

There has been no change in statutory interpretation by the Alaska Department of Public Safety, Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers (AWT). Current statute does not authorize cooperative fishing among multiple permit holders in the set gillnet fishery. However, joint ventures are allowed in the Kodiak area under 5 AAC 18.331(e), permitting up to two CFEC permit holders to fish combined gear and deliver/sell catch under one of the permits.

AWT conducts proactive patrols and responds to reports of suspected violations. Based on the facts of each case, enforcement actions may include education, warnings, citations, or criminal charges. The primary objective is resource protection through compliance.

In 2023, the AWT received information about a set gillnet operation reportedly transferring ownership of permits at high frequency and delivering/selling fish under the names of one or two primary permit holders on behalf of other permit holders. This prompted a large-scale investigation, currently ongoing, involving suspected criminal behavior. During this period, AWT observed similar patterns elsewhere in the fleet where one or two permit holders were

delivering/ selling fish on behalf of numerous other permit holders. Troopers began educating participants about fish ticket requirements during routine patrols.

While public testimony has described such practices as long-standing, some of these actions may violate Alaska law. Depending on the set of circumstances, the following statutes or regulations may apply:

- AS 16.05.690(a) (b) – Record of Purchases (Falsify Fish Ticket)
- 5 AAC 39.130 (c) (2) – Name and signature of the CFEC permit holder that operated the unit of gear with which the fish were taken
- AS 16.05.680 – Unlawful Practices

Since January 1, 2022, AWT has investigated 14 cases statewide (Bristol Bay, Kodiak, Dillingham, Sitka, Ketchikan, Yakutat, Lake Louise, and Naknek). These involved misdemeanor charges or citations for violations of the statutes and regulations listed above.

To clarify a recurring point during public record, a claim that a set gillnet fisherman was charged with a felony is incorrect. That individual was cited with a misdemeanor charge, reduced to a violation resulting in a \$300 fine. The violation was observed in the presence of the Alaska Wildlife Trooper who acted accordingly.

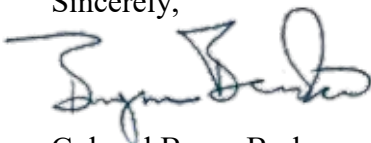
**2. Representative Saddler requested details on enforcement in Cook Inlet, including legal basis, policy changes, citation data, whether charges were misdemeanor or felonies.**

No enforcement action has been taken specific to “cooperative” set gillnet fishing in the Cook Inlet, as this type of fishing is not recognized under law in that area. While some enforcement actions may involve misdemeanor charges related to other criminal activity, no felony offenses have been associated with these fisheries.

**3. Representative Saddler requested information on educational efforts by AWT regarding new enforcement efforts.**

AWT does not track individual instances of education during field contacts, however education is a routine and ongoing part of enforcement operations. This applies across all activities, including commercial fishing, sport fishing, hunting, trapping, or subsistence use. Education is regularly used to promote voluntary compliance.

Sincerely,



Colonel Bryan Barlow  
Director

Chair Burke  
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cc: Jordan Shilling, Director, Governor's Legislative Office