

February 23, 2018

Tom Carruth  
Box 8641  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Rep. Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol Room 513  
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: HB 354

Dear Representative Ortiz,

I have been a commercial harvest diver in Ketchikan for over 20 years. I presently am a member of the SARDFA Sea Cucumber Committee and the Geoduck Committee.

I support HB 354. It would greatly streamline the method SARDFA members can change the assessment tax we pay on sea cucumbers, geoducks, and red sea urchins. We recently tried to lower the sea cucumber assessment tax, but due to the way the 1998 regulations were written it was difficult to do and in the end we did not lower the 5% assessment tax in the sea cucumber fishery. I believe the changes in HB 354 will allow us to make that change.

At this time in the Sea Cucumber reserve funds have sufficient money to meet our financial obligations to the State of Alaska for years and still lower the assessment tax. By reducing the assessment tax the divers that participate in the sea cucumber fishery would realize real money back to their pockets starting in the 2018\_19 season. The commercial divers still pay a 3% fisheries tax on top of the Assessment tax.

The three SARDFA fisheries (geoduck clams, sea cucumbers, and red sea urchins) will always meet their financial obligation to the State. If we don't we would not have a fishery that year. This Bill does not change that obligation. Successful passage of this Bill would have no effect on the State or any other organizations.

Again, thank you on your efforts on our behalf.

Sincerely,

Tom Carruth