



March 21, 2018

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801
Re: Support for HB 260

To whom it may concern,

The Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO) is a non-profit dedicated to the sustainability of the guided sportfishing industry. SEAGO advocates for management and regulatory actions which serve to benefit the fishery resources and the sportfishing industry. Allowing sport anglers to present electronic licenses and tags is one such benefit.

The ability to display electronic licenses increases ease and convenience for anglers, as well as enforcement officials and Department of Fish & Game staff. Anglers are highly likely to have smartphones available to verify licenses and tags in compliance with State fish and wildlife laws. Furthermore, this form of license can reduce State expenses on staff time and printing costs. Most importantly for Alaska's economy is the opportunity to increase participation and data collection.

Alaska is known for its fishing and tourism opportunities, and we need to invest in its management and economic opportunities. In 2017, Alaska sold 153,763 residential sport and combined fish and game licenses and 65,885 king salmon stamps.¹ Non-resident visitors to Alaska bought 295,214 sportfishing-only licenses to fish from anywhere between one day to one year, as well as 105,357 king salmon stamps. In addition to this significant income, which is a major funding source for the Sportfish Division, licensees spent money in-state on fishing supplies, fuel, food, and lodging. Lowering barriers to entry for new anglers and visitors by allowing electronic licenses can increase this spending and benefit Alaska's economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Samantha Weinstein, Executive Director
Southeast Alaska Guides Organization
Samantha@seagoalaska.org

¹ Alaska Dept. of Fish & Game, Hunt/Sport Fish & Game License Accounting by Calendar Year, available at http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/license/pdfs/1926_2017_licenses_stamps_tags_issued.pdf