



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

April 29, 2025

Chair Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: HB 111 – Finfish Farms and Products

Dear Chair Stutes and Members of House Fisheries Committee,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 35 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on HB 111: "An Act relating to finfish farms and finfish farm products; and providing for an effective date."

UFA **opposes** HB 111. Alaskans throughout the state rely on our fisheries resources for personal use, subsistence, sport, and commercial purposes. This bill would allow for the farming of non-native fish species, which poses a well-documented and well-known risk to Alaska's wild salmon and trout stocks. This bill calls for the non-native fish to be sterile, but there is no way to guarantee 100% sterility. Even in "contained" grow-out environments, the risk remains for the possibility of disease transmission by farmed fish resulting from being transported by predators to non-contained areas (ex- a bird picking up a fish from a landlocked lake and dropping it in a nearby stream). Additionally, larger scale fish farming operations would likely cause significant pollution to nearby waters and lands from solid waste discharges of fish feed and feces produced by rearing these fish.

The Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and the seafood industry have worked hand in hand for decades to create a brand that sets wild Alaskan seafood apart from the rest of the product being sold around the world. The Alaska brand is well known as standing for wild, quality, and sustainability. Allowing finfish farming in the state will cause confusion in the marketplace and will have a negative impact on the Alaska seafood brand.

Allowing for finfish farming in Alaska is a dangerous and uncertain path. While this legislation does not allow for the farming of salmon, the permitting of non-salmon species sets a bad precedent for allowing salmon farming in the future and may provide direct competition to other commercially harvestable species now. HB 111 is the proverbial “foot in the door.”

Fisheries play a significant role in supporting coastal Alaska communities, feeding families, and contributing to the state’s economy. We urge legislators to continue advocating for policies that protect Alaska’s wild fisheries and wild fish populations that benefit so many around the state and reject HB 111/SB 108.

Regards,



Matt Alward
President



Tracy Welch
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Longline Fishermen’s Association • Alaska Scallop Association • Alaska Trollers Association
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Area M Seiners Association • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association • Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area “M” Fishermen
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Fishing Vessel
Owners Assn Groundfish Forum • Kodiak Crab Alliance Cooperative • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • Kodiak Seiners Association • North
Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Northwest Setnetters Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners
Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast
Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman’s Alliance • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast
Alaska Seiners • Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
Valdez Fisheries Development Association