



Public Comment in Support of HB124: AIDEA Accountability Act

Dear Members of the Alaska Legislature,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on **House Bill 124**, the *AIDEA Accountability Act*. On behalf of **Alaska Backcountry Hunters & Anglers (AK BHA)**—a community of hunters, anglers, and public lands advocates working to safeguard Alaska’s wild public lands, waters, and wildlife—we strongly support this bill’s emphasis on increased accountability, transparency, and public participation in AIDEA’s decision-making processes, which directly affect our shared wild spaces.

As outdoorsman and women, we understand the important role that economic development authorities can play in supporting Alaska’s communities and industries. At the same time, we believe that decisions involving significant public resources, major infrastructure projects, and impacts to lands and waters must be made transparently, with meaningful public input and robust consideration of ecological and community consequences.

HB 124 advances these principles in several important ways.

- 1) It enhances public representation on the AIDEA board by adding seats for an environmental consultant representative and additional public members appointed through broader legislative authority. This helps ensure that a diversity of Alaskan voices, including those who value long-term stewardship of fish, wildlife, and public lands, are included in discussions about major economic projects.
- 2) It strengthens project oversight requirements by establishing clear criteria for AIDEA to assess public welfare, environmental and economic impacts, and community consent before committing significant funds. This protects taxpayers and gives Alaskans confidence that decisions are grounded in sound analysis and local input.
- 3) It aims to improve transparency and accountability through annual audited financial reporting, public records access, and legislative notification requirements. This aligns with good governance practices and allows communities, including rural and hunting/fishing stakeholders, to stay informed about how public capital is used.

Given the importance of maintaining trust in public institutions and the long-term value of Alaska’s fish and wildlife resources, AK BHA believes HB 124 is a positive step toward balancing responsible economic development with transparent governance and public



accountability. This type of accountability is the rule, not the exception, in Alaska. AIDEA should be held to the same standard as other agencies.

We encourage the Legislature to advance this bill and appreciate your attention to policies that strengthen transparency, enhance public trust, and protect the shared resources so many Alaskans rely on for livelihoods, avocational hunting and fishing, and subsistence.

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers,



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