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— UNITED —

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February 7, 2025

Chair Rep. Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Special Committee
State Capitol Room 120
Juneau AK, 99801
House.Fisheries@akleg.gov

RE: Support HB 31 - Registration of Boats Exemption

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) is an industry-based nonprofit strengthening commercial fishing in the Prince William Sound region by advocating for the needs of community-based fishermen. Since 1935, CDFU has represented fishermen and their families for thriving fisheries that sustain regional ecosystems, communities, and ways of life - ensuring they are well informed, resourced, and mobilized to affect positive change for all harvesters in the region.

We are writing to offer our support for the amendments concerning exemptions for the registration of boats to include commercial vessels with valid certificates of documentation issued by the US Coast Guard (USCG). We are also in favor of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) assessing an annual \$8 registration fee for commercial vessels that have a certificate of documentation issued by the USCG, and sharing relevant list information as appropriate to help prove valid registrations.

Compliance and enforcement of the Derelict Vessel law of 2021 has been challenging, both for commercial fishermen whose vessels are indeed properly registered, and for troopers issuing citations without visible access to that registration. Commercial



fishing vessels are not required by the US Coast Guard to display their USCG numbers on the outside of their vessel, only to hold documentation inside the hull. Alaska Department of Fish and Game requires vessels to display their ADFG numbers on the outside of their boat for easy identification and reference. The interim solution for compliance has been for vessels to register with the DMV for a sticker, but this has proven duplicative and with its own set of challenges in equity and access for many vessel owners statewide who have less access to a DMV because of location or lack of year-round hours. We heard reports from fishermen whose local DMV didn't have the stickers in inventory. By many accounts it has been messy and complicated for operators to comply.

The CFEC assessing an annual fee for permit holders is an elegant way to manage the problems with registered boat exemptions in relation to the Derelict Vessel law. We don't want to see any more confusion or arguments between operators and enforcement officers about whether a boat is indeed registered.

Sincerely,

Ezekiel Brown
Board President