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Dear Chairman Steve Thompson and the Fisheries Special Committee,

I've fished commercially Area E, the Copper River-Prince William Sound area, since 1971 and primarily for salmon. The positive advances in Area E made by the commercial fishing sector during that time, even with a few setbacks (primarily the Exxon Valdez), have been amazing. When I began fishing in 1971 neither the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation nor the Valdez Fisheries Development Association existed. Both of these commercial fisher originated and driven organizations have been instrumental in vastly increasing harvest levels for ALL users whether they be subsistence, sport, personal use or commercial.

I write to you today to register my advice that House Bill 20, submitted by Representative Stoltze, is a bad idea. As you are aware and currently the only user group that has a priority is subsistence. The other user groups are on equal footing. This is as fair as it can be and as realistically manageable as it can be. House Bill 20 would upset that important equilibrium.

There are many Alaskan families engaged in the family business of commercial fishing who are looking to the leadership of our great state, which you are, to help keep our fisheries vital, strong and thriving for everyone. Please reject HB 20.

Bill Black