

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association

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March 7, 2011

Representative Steve Thompson
Chair, House Committee on Fisheries
State Capitol, Room 428
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Via email: Representative_Steve_Thompson@legis.state.ak.us

RE: HB 20- PERSONAL USE FISHING PRIORITY, OPPOSE

Dear Representative Thompson and House Fisheries members,

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association (PVOA) appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 20 Personal Use Fishing Priority. PVOA is a diverse group of 100 commercial fishermen and businesses operating primarily in Southeast Alaska. Our members provide millions of meals to the public annually by participating in a variety of fisheries statewide including salmon, herring, halibut, cod, crab, blackcod, shrimp, and dive fisheries. Many PVOA members are also active sport, personal use, and subsistence fishermen who depend on sustainable and conservative management of Alaska's fishing resources to ensure healthy fisheries for the future.

It is our understanding that HB 20 as introduced would mandate a Legislative personal use fishing priority after subsistence. As active participants in the fisheries management process including the Board of Fisheries (BOF), we are OPPOSED to any action that would take away the ability of the BOF and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to effectively manage Alaska's fisheries resources. Alaska is the poster-child for sustainability and fisheries management. Any actions that erode or eliminate the ability of the BOF or ADF&G to effectively manage our sport, personal use, subsistence, and commercial fisheries should be opposed.

Careful consideration is urged when placing any priority on Alaska's fisheries resources. Our commercial and sport fisheries are both viable and culturally significant to Alaska. Commercial fishing is Alaska's largest private sector employer, and third in revenue generated behind oil/gas and Federal Government. Commercial fishermen not only support their families and community, but also provide most Alaskans with access to the resource.

Although decisions made by the BOF may not always be popular, it is extremely important that the public process with input provided by all user groups is protected. As per the Alaska Constitution, with only subsistence harvest taking priority, we are ensuring that the sport, personal use, and commercial fisheries *all* share in the burden of conservation of Alaska's fisheries resources.

In closing, we urge the House Fisheries Committee to support the public BOF process and the sound management ability of ADF&G by opposing HB 20. Thank you for your time and dedication to Alaska's fishery resources. If we can provide further information or answer any questions as you make this important decision, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. Curry', written in a cursive style.

Julianne Curry
Director