

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13 (27-LS0802\A)

The North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) is one of eight regional councils established by the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to oversee management of the nation's fisheries. The North Pacific Fishery Management Council has jurisdiction over the million square mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Alaska. NPFMC manages federal fisheries in Alaska valued at over one billion dollars annually, with primary responsibility for ground fish management in the Gulf of Alaska, Bering Sea, and Aleutian Islands, including cod, Pollock, flatfish, mackerel, sablefish, and rockfish species.

The Council has eleven voting members and four non-voting members. The eleven voting members include the Commissioner of the Department of Fish & Game, Director of the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Director of the Oregon Department of Fish & wildlife, the Alaska Regional Administrator of NOAA Fisheries, five public members appointed by the Governor of Alaska, and two public members appointed by the Secretary from the State of Washington.

Since, it is estimated that 95 percent of rural households consume fish caught for subsistence, and sports fishing contributes over one-hundred and twenty three million dollars annually, their voices are vital to the sustainability of the resource and should be represented at the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Both sports fish licensees and Alaska subsistence users who have participated in NPFMC meetings have commonly expressed frustration with the lack of opportunity to meaningfully participate in the process, and a lack of representation on the Council. However, allocation of fish in waters managed by NPFMC directly affects the quantity of fish available for harvest by sports fish licensee and subsistence users.

HCR 13 requests that the Governor designate both a sports fish licensee and a subsistence user for a seat on the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. In a state that is home to 3,000 rivers, 3,000,000 lakes and 6,640 miles of coastline, protecting opportunities for sports fishers and subsistence users is vital.