



March 22, 2013

Senator Pete Kelly, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Kelly:

We are writing in regard to the operating budget for the Alaska Department of Fish and Game now under consideration by Senate Finance.

We would like to thank the committee for including \$400,000 in general fund dollars as requested by the Governor to replace expiring federal grants. These funds will go to support the following programs essential to the state's management efforts:

1. Port sampling program used to evaluate strength of salmon returns and inform in-season management decisions;
2. Genetic stock identification (GSI) for sockeye salmon;
3. Chinook biometric analyses in support of Alaska's position in the US/Canada Salmon Treaty negotiations.

As you know, Alaska's management regime relies on in-season management decisions based on information collected during the fisheries. Without the information collected by the port-sampling program, through aerial surveys, and other in-season efforts, the department cannot accurately determine whether fisheries should open or close, or whether escapements goals have been reached.

In the absence of accurate information, the department will likely act conservatively and curtail fisheries, which results in less employment in our communities, less revenue to the state and municipalities, fewer seafood products sold, reduced market share for Alaska salmon, and increased market share for our competitors.

We strongly support funding for these essential programs to ensure our valuable salmon resources are well managed and continue to provide employment opportunities for future generations of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Liz Cabrera
Coordinator