

March 4, 2013

Senator \_\_\_\_\_  
State Capitol Room ###  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to submit this letter for the official hearing record on SB26, "An Act relating to the Alaska Land Act... relating to the Alaska Water Use Act; and providing for an effective date."

The Alaska Chapter of the Conservancy works with Alaskans from all walks of life to sustain the lands and waters that are so essential in providing jobs, food, recreation and traditional ways of life for Alaskans. One of the Conservancy's significant activities in Alaska involves analysis of the minimum stream flows necessary for sustaining salmon populations and harvests. The Alaska Water Act provides that non-governmental entities can apply to the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to reserve sufficient water flows; to date The Nature Conservancy and our partners have invested approximately \$1.5 million in gathering the required hydrologic data to support in-stream flow applications in 21 stream reaches in Bristol Bay. These reservations are carefully designed in collaboration with state agencies (Fish & Game, Natural Resources) and constitute a science-based, good faith effort to work with the State of Alaska to sustain a public resource while also allowing for additional land and resource development.

SB26, as introduced, would change the water act such that non-governmental entities could no longer submit in-stream flow applications. In addition, it would invalidate the proposals already researched, developed and submitted but not yet approved. Even though the application fees would be returned, The Nature Conservancy's investment of \$1.5 million would be lost and would negate significant public interest work by the Conservancy and partners to sustain Alaska's salmon fisheries production. The Conservancy recommends that Sections 40 and 44 of the legislation as introduced be deleted.

Sincerely,



Randall Hagenstein  
State Director