

Alaska Legislature

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House Bill 241 Sponsor Statement

Alaska's commercial fishing industry has long attracted fisherman from across the United States, and around the world, to seek their fortunes, and join Alaskan fisherman in the state's bountiful waters. To promote the conservation and sustained yield management of fisheries resources and the economic health and stability of the industry, the state enacted policies to regulate entry into fisheries. For a commercial fishing operation to participate in a fishery with limited access, they must apply for a permit, which if accepted, comes with a fee. The state levies different fees for permit applicants and holders who are Alaska residents than those who are nonresidents.

House Bill 241 seeks to address concerns that many current permit holders and applicants who pay fees meant for residents of Alaska are in fact, living outside of the state. To better determine the qualifications for in-state residents, this bill uses existing infrastructure in the form of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation's eligibility criteria for the permanent fund dividend. House Bill 241 would require that the Permanent Fund Corporation confirm for the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission that an individual applying for a permit or renewal has received, or is eligible to receive a permanent fund dividend. This would both ensure parity between definitions used by departments as well as cut down on unnecessary investigations.

This bill does not make a judgement call on fees previously set by the state, or the need for residents and nonresidents to be treated differently in our fisheries. It additionally does not limit participation in our fisheries to any one group. It simply allows the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to benefit from existing residency data, and to ensure that those benefiting from resident fees are truly Alaska residents.