



House Fisheries Committee
Representative Stutes, Chair
Alaska Capitol Building, Room 416
Juneau, AK 99801

6 April 2015

OPPOSE HB 110: PERSONAL USE PRIORITY

Dear Madam Chair,

The Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) is a commercial fishing gear group comprised of more than 150 paying skipper and crew memberships, as well as over 75 paying business members. SEAS represents the interests of roughly 1,500 fishermen in the S01A fishery as well as their families and communities throughout SE Alaska and beyond; and we believe it is also well worth noting that nearly 30% are SEALASKA Tlingit or Haida shareholders.

The SEAS membership, Southeast fisheries-dependent support businesses, and all of Southeast's major seafood processors are 100% unanimously opposed to any change to priority of uses for fisheries users in the state of Alaska. Unlike the Railbelt scenario, understood well by many members of the legislature, here in Southeast Alaska, the Personal Use (PU) fisheries occur in freshwater estuaries behind the mixed-stock saltwater sport and charter fisheries. This means that this bill would provide a direct benefit and priority that would relegate our valuable Southeast sport fisheries to the back seat. Southeast sport fishers catch around 80,000 kings and 300,000-500,000 cohoes each year.

Our commercial fisheries provide the bedrock for anywhere between 30%- 90% of the private economy here in Southeast, depending upon which community you live in. We are managed with balance in mind with respect to sport, commercial, personal use, and subsistence. The Southeast seine fishery recently had a very negative experience with the Federal Government's idea of how to manage a commercial fishery with a 100% subsistence priority. Such a great latitude was and could be given by the federal subsistence priority that entire towns and cities as well as whole industries are subject to the whims of *priority*, without

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even so much as an opportunity for scientific or socioeconomic inquiry. We do not need another law to attempt to run generations of Alaskan commercial and sports fishermen off of their fishing grounds.

And what of the unintended consequences of this bill? HB 110 would have, for example, negative implications for the 2018 re-negotiation of the Pacific Salmon Commission Treaty, an agreement which the State of Alaska must not simply adhere to, but would be put in a worse position for negotiations.

What is the problem we are attempting to fix here? Is there a large contingent of unsatisfied users? Is this bill not just an end-run around a very fair system that produces millions of pounds of salmon just on the Fairbanks and Anchorage road systems for Alaskan personal use fishers?

Please do not delay in dispatching this egregious legislation. As it is, however, there are unintended consequences for our part of the state with this bill, and we remain unconvinced that this is a solution for any part of the great state of Alaska. The statewide perspective and statewide socioeconomic sensitivity shown by Southcentral and Fairbanks legislators has, at times, been amazing. We hope this is one of those times when the statewide perspective is the ultimate perspective.

Sincerely
Dan Castle, President