

Protecting the integrity & biological diversity of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge....



**FRIENDS OF
THE
ANCHORAGE
COASTAL
WILDLIFE
REFUGE (FAR)**

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The Honorable Representatives Andy Josephson, Co-Chair
State Capitol Room 102
The Honorable Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair
The Honorable Representative Dean Westlake, Vice Chair
State Capitol Room 126
House Resources Standing Committee
Juneau, AK 99801

Via email: Representative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov, Representative.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov
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Subject: FAR's Testimony in Support of HB 130

2017 April 6

Dear Representatives Josephson, Tarr, Westlake, and Whom it May Concern:

I write on behalf of Friends of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (FAR) with full support for HB 130, brought forward by Governor Walker, to help clarify uncertain boundaries, help avoid conflicts, & make management by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game more straightforward. FAR is a 501 c-3 nonprofit organization in good standing with the IRS and the State of Alaska comprised of citizens and professionals. Our mission is to preserve the integrity and biological diversity of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (ACWR). This easily damaged subarctic saltmarsh system supports an unusual diversity of plants, birds, mammals and invertebrates, and is of continental conservation significance. The proximity of the refuge to Alaska's largest city makes it important for public education and enjoyment but also makes it highly vulnerable. We appreciate this chance to comment regarding HB 130, the actions of which are long overdue. It is in all our best interest for the State to facilitate a clear & strong management system for the health of these public lands & the wildlife they support for the benefit of not only ourselves, but for future generations.

The Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge is but one of 32 Alaska State Refuges, Sanctuaries, and Critical Habitat Areas and is managed by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G). This bill proposes amendments to the statutory boundary descriptions of nine of these Special Areas (Izembek, Cape Newenham & Palmer Hay Flats refuges, & for Port Moller, Egegik, Pilot Point, Fox River Flats, & Kachemak Bay critical habitat areas). It is very important for cooperative management between agencies, landowners, & others, that boundaries are clear. While errors & minor oversights persist clear discussions & decisions are difficult if not impossible. FAR appreciates and supports this needed housekeeping action to ameliorate consistency across cohesive lands areas for the good of these valuable public lands & to maximize rapport with agencies, land owners, & others who need to cooperate from time to time in their respective responsibilities.

Thank you for considering this matter & helping to correct inadvertent, but long-standing errors by moving forward with HB 130.

Barbara Švarný Carlson,

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President & Executive Director