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April 12, 2017

Representative Louise Stutes
Chair, House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Stutes:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) appreciates the opportunity to submit comments on HB199, "An Act establishing general fish and wildlife permits and major and minor anadromous fish habitat permits for certain activities; establishing related penalties; and relation to the protection of fish and game and fish and game habitat."

AMA is a non-profit membership organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, vendors, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies. We look for and produce gold, silver, platinum, molybdenum, lead, zinc, copper, coal, limestone, sand and gravel, crushed stone, armor rock, and other materials.

All of AMA's members operate within the State's rigorous, science-based regulatory process. This is not a rubber-stamp, "easy," or superficial process. It is lengthy, rigorous, and stringent. A key component of this process is the protection of Alaska's fisheries, and not just fish habitat protection, but fish habitat enhancement.

The safeguarding of fish species at Alaska's mining projects is a success story. HB199 suggests significant regulatory problems that simply do not exist. HB199 proposes a massive rewrite of fish habitat regulation that is not only a solution in search of a problem, but is an all-out shut down of community and economic development. The provisions in HB199 would ensure that development of new mines, oilfields, wastewater plants, highways, and more would not be built. At a time of billion dollar deficits, these are not the kinds of bills Alaskans should be pursuing.

Because the protection of fish is a high priority of Alaska's mining industry, AMA is and always has been a willing participant for workgroups to review the current process and find improvement. However, HB199 is severely flawed, and should be abandoned in favor of productive discussion that enhances our regulatory process while continuing to grow the State economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Deantha Crockett
Executive Director