

# UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

Box 2196, Petersburg AK 99833 \* (253) 237-3099 \* usag.alaska@gmail.com \* akgillnet.org

April 16, 2017

Senator John Coghill, Chair  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Capitol Bldg., Juneau, AK, 99801  
Sent via email: [Senator.John.Coghill@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.John.Coghill@akleg.gov)

RE: OPPOSITION for HB 129B "Fish & Game: Offenses; Licenses; Penalties"

Dear Senator Coghill and Committee Members:

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters (USAG) represents the interests of 473 permit holders and their families and we OPPOSE the amendments to the Commercial Fisheries part of this bill:

**"Sec. 6.** AS 16.05.722(a) is amended to read:

*(a) A person who, without any culpable mental state, violates AS 16.05.440 -16.05.690 [,] or a regulation of the Board of Fisheries or the department governing commercial fishing [,] is guilty of a violation and upon conviction is punishable by a fine of not more than(1) **\$6,000** [\$3,000] for a first conviction; (2) **\$12,000** [\$6,000] for a second conviction or for a subsequent conviction not described in (3) of this subsection; and (3) **\$15,000** [\$9,000] for a third or subsequent conviction within a 10-year period."*

There is already adequate incentive for fishermen to not violate regulations with the state's ability to seize gear, boats, harvest and impart jail time along with the slate of potential fines. We are not advocating or defending criminal activity. Even the most honest person may find himself unintentionally violating a regulation while fishing as weather, tides, equipment failure and other factors can suddenly shift and drastically change a fishing situation. For instance, a fishing net could drift into closed waters after a hydraulic line unexpectedly breaks and the fisherman is no longer able to mechanically reel in his net.

Please do not amend the current language in Section 6; commercial fishermen have enough incentive to not violate regulations.

Thank you,



Cynthia Wallesz, Executive Director

Cc: Senator Meyer, Chair Senate Rules Committee and Bill Sponsor