## Dear Rep. Stutes and members of the House Fisheries Committee,

Thank you for introducing HB 199, proactive legislation which modernizes Alaska's fish habitat permitting law, as outlined by the Alaska Board of Fisheries in a recent letter to your committee. We are writing to express our support for this long-due update to Alaska's salmon habitat protection law.

Salmon are integral to Alaska's economy and quality of life. As fishermen our incomes are directly impacted by water quality, in-stream flow levels, fish passage and other components of healthy salmon habitat. We need science-based standards to protect salmon habitat and encourage responsible development.

Currently the permitting law only applies to waters listed in the Anadromous Waters Catalogue, which ADF&G estimates to include less than 50% of the salmon-bearing waterbodies in our state and in places like the MatSu, less than 30%. We need better assurance that ADF&G has the authority it needs to protect salmon habitat.

Furthermore, there is no current requirement for fishermen, or any of the public, to be notified when development permits are issued. If we want to find out what is happening near one of our fisheries we have to file an information request with the department.

The economic value of Alaska's commercial fishing industry extends far beyond our individual incomes; we contribute significantly to support services in addition to our daily costs of living in Alaska's fishing communities. If our fisheries are well-managed we will continue to contribute to Alaska's economy in perpetuity. Providing adequate protection to fish habitat is part of sound management, and is the single most effective way to ensure that this enduring cornerstone of the State's sustainable economy is not eroded as we seek fiscal solutions in difficult economic times. Please ensure that Alaska's salmon resources retain their value for generations to come by passing HB 199.

Sincerely,

Oliver Lankin

Manara Bell

First Name Last Name
Carl Adams

Cynthia Adams Cesar Alvarado

Brad Alzl

Claudia Anderson Brooks Areson Corey Arnold Jennifer Aspelund Тгасу Asselin Everett Athorp Todd Bailey Boris Basargin Patrick Baum

Anneke Beach-Garcia

Eric Beamer Samantha Becker

Celeste Beck-Godell
Nancy Behnken
Brian Bennett
David Berhardt
Ron Blake
Iris Blakeslee

Rich Blanc Lindsey Bloom Zenia Borenin Dylan Braund Melanie Brown Keith Brown Maggie Bursch Olcay Caf

Alex Carleton Lanny Carpenter Charles Clement Sommers Cole Jolene Cox Keith Cox Ben Crew Richard Curran Cameron Currie Kevin Currier

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Morgan Edminster
Fred Erofeeff
Sean Fansler

Johnny Fishmonger

Louie Flora Marcus Fox Sarah Frances Michael Friccero John Glotfelty Kevin Graham Tyler Green Ronn Griffin Glenn Gustafson

Travis Hall Jacob Hand Cole Hansen Heather Hardcastle Hardcastle Kirk Kelsey Hawley Darren Heath Karen Hebert Hannah Heimbuch Sierra Henry Jay Herring Tara Hines Douglas hogen Ryan Horwath Mike Houston Joe Huddleston Jensen

Brad Jensen
Martin Johnson
Forrest Johnson

Michael Johnson Ken Jones Регі Jordan Jordan Sarah Kawahara Joel Kean Misty Ben Kerwin Kirkpatrick Kerry

Peter Kling

Cathryn Klusmeier Chris Knight Dave Koester Heather Koponen Rowan Kurtz **Alexus** Kwachka Taylor Landrud Zach LaPerriere

Scott Lesh Cliff Lewis Linville Ann John Little Barbara Loutrel Evan Love Matthew Luck Keith Lutz Ilia M.

Westin Mackenzie Carie Mackenzie Tanner Mackiewicz Eugene Maltzeff Marinkovich Matt Donald Martinson Stacy Mayovsky McFadden Dane Stu McTaggart Brianne Mecum Robert Meyer Andy Mezirow Jordan Millar Tim Miller Miller Nora

Lorna Mills

Cale Montrone
Elizabeth Moore
Marisa Morgan
Howard Mozen
Lucas Mullen

Hillary Mullen Kathleen Murphy Glen Nash

Russell Novak
Eric Olsen
Todd Paryman

Eric Patton

Dean Peper

Duane Petersen

Brandt Petersen

Rebecca Piatt
Charles Piecuch

Pietron

Tim Pine
Lance Preston
Joseph Princen
Jamison Ramsey
David Ranney
Serena Ranney
Tyone Raymond

chad Reel

armin reimnitz
Chris Rhoads
Chuck Ridley
Nicole Riga
James Riggle
Katie Rinyland

Pete Roddy
Trevor Rollman
Tom Rollman
Levi Rollman
Sonja Rootvik
Laurie Rootvik
Konrad Schaad

lan

Seward

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