



Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

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February 21, 2018

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
State Capitol, Room 411
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Support for HB 188

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tomkins,

Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (BSFA) supports House Bill (HB) 188, which authorizes the establishment of regional fisheries trusts. After observing the effort you poured into HB 188, we are confident that regional fisheries trusts will help restore local fishermen's participation and access to Alaska's fisheries. We believe regional fisheries trusts are carefully designed to address the economic, cultural, and social consequences of limited entry permits leaving Alaska's rural and coastal communities.

BSFA began in 1979 with 150 fishermen from over 30 villages in western Alaska ranging from Bristol Bay to Kotzebue Sound. These fishermen united to become more involved in new fisheries that were developing directly off their coastline, and to build an organization that was concerned with helping local fishermen gain full economic benefits from Alaska's fisheries.

We have worked diligently to earn the opportunity to serve 192 communities and just over 125,000 Alaska residents. Today BSFA is directed by a 14-member board made up of fishermen from Bristol Bay, the Yukon, Kuskokwim, Norton Sound, Kotzebue and St. Paul. On behalf of our large constituency, BSFA works to defeat obstacles impeding our fishermen's livelihoods.

HB 188 falls directly in line with this purpose, to benefit the fishermen that we serve as well as others around the state of Alaska. Commercial fishing is an economic, cultural, and social cornerstone for our fishermen. A thriving fleet, full of local permit holders, is essential to the communities our fishermen call home.

Over the last thirty years, we have seen barriers to entering commercial fishing grow for aspiring fishermen around Alaska. In the past, boats with names of Alaska communities etched onto the side filled our harbors. Now, these same local harbors sit half-full, or even empty.

Regional fisheries trusts, as envisioned by HB 188, are a tool to help bring boats back to those harbors. The ability to acquire a small number of permits on the open market, to then temporarily transfer to up-and-coming fishermen, meets a unique need. The return of permits to Alaska's rural

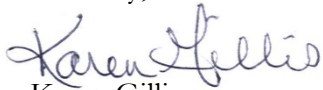
Serving western Alaska small boat fisheries since 1980

and coastal communities will also bring fishing income, jobs, and economic growth back to these communities.

We expect passage of HB 188 to facilitate local participation in commercially important state water fisheries, provide important entry opportunities for new fishermen and increase revenue flow into Alaska communities.

BSFA is pleased to support HB 188. Our coastal communities have a vested interest in the successful implementation of regional fisheries trusts and BSFA looks forward to the bill's passage.

Sincerely,



Karen Gillis

Executive Director

karen@bsfaak.org

Communities Served by Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

cc: BSFA Board of Directors
Steve Ivanoff, Chair, Unalakleet
John Lamont, Vice-Chair, Nuiqsut
Karen Hadley, Secretary-Treasurer, Kotzebue
Ragnar Alstrom, Alakanuk
Eugene Asicksik, Shaktoolik
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Bish Gallahorn, Kotzebue
Andrew Greene, Kotzebue
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Phillip Lestenkof, St. Paul
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