



January 31, 2017

Members of the House Committee on Fisheries  
Alaska State Legislature  
C/O Reid Harris, House Fisheries Committee Aide

**RE: Comments in Support of HB 14, "An Act relating to the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve."**

Dear Committee Members,

Please accept this letter on behalf of Trout Unlimited (TU) in support of H.B. 14, "An Act relating to the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve; and providing for an effective date." TU is grateful for the Committee's attention to the important issues affecting Bristol Bay fisheries.

TU is the nation's largest sportsman's organization dedicated to coldwater conservation with more than 1,000 members in Alaska. TU members own and operate businesses—including sport-fishing lodges, air taxi services and commercial fishing operations—that depend on clean water, natural flows and healthy wild salmon and resident fish populations. In addition to our members in more remote parts of the state, including Bristol Bay, TU has active chapters in Fairbanks, Anchorage and the Mat-Su, on the Kenai Peninsula, and in Southeast Alaska.

The Bristol Bay region is the world's greatest wild salmon fishery, contributing many thousands of jobs and more than \$2 billion in annual economic activity. It provides more than half of the world's wild sockeye salmon, is a once-in-a-lifetime destination for trophy rainbow trout anglers, consistently ranks among the top three producers of king salmon, and has supported Alaska Native communities for thousands of years. These important jobs and the irreplaceable culture of the Bristol Bay region will last millennia if we take care of the region's unique fish, wildlife and water resources.

Alaskans from all walks of life overwhelmingly recognize the great importance of the Bristol Bay fisheries reserve to Alaska's economy, culture and communities. Ballot Measure 4, which passed in 2014 with more than 65% of the vote and a majority in every voting district throughout the state, is a clear mandate for the legislature to do all it can to protect Bristol Bay's world-class fisheries and fish and wildlife resources from the dangers posed by large-scale metallic sulfide mining operations in the region. Because H.B. 14 would strengthen the protections Alaskans overwhelming voted to support in 2014, TU supports the bill and encourages this committee and the State Legislature to do the same.

The fish, wildlife and water resources of the Bristol Bay region are central to Alaskans' way of life and our economic, cultural and spiritual well-being. It is critical that the legislature ensure the continued productivity of these irreplaceable and important resources.

Sincerely,

Austin Williams  
Alaska Director of Law and Policy

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*Trout Unlimited: America's Leading Coldwater Fisheries Conservation Organization*

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