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Senator Chris Birch  
Chair, Senate Natural Resources Committee  
Room 125, State Capital  
Juneau Alaska, 99801-11822

March 19, 2019

Re SB 51

Dear Senator Birch and Committee Members,

I was born on a homestead between Fairbanks and Nenana, when there was little more than a “cat trail” beyond Ester. I have lived outside of Ester, in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, Petersburg, Kupreanof, Unalaska and Haines. I have been to countless other Alaskan communities from Ketchikan to Kotzebue, from Eagle to Nikolski. I have operated fishing and tender vessels along the coast from Bird Rock to Dixon Entrance and places far beyond; I’ve trolled, gillnetted, seined, king crabbed, trawled, and tendered salmon or herring across that coastline. I have swum from a sinking plane to a snowy beach and I have wallowed in chest deep powder snow at 50 below - hoping that hope that a few have known - that I would make it to the shore and that I would make it to that warm cabin. And yes, I have swatted my pound of mosquitoes. I am not the toughest Alaskan by any measure and certainly not the wisest, but I have seen this land, I have tasted its streams, breathed its air, eaten the bounty it has to offer, and I love this land and I love this State – The Great Land, the Great State of Alaska.

I strongly SUPPORT SB51 as the STATE’s system for processing Tier 3 nominations. Anything that we as a people feel so strongly about, that we should establish it into perpetuity, cannot be so established without great deliberation and regard. The nomination of a Tier 3 waterbody is such a designation. To what end would we arrive, if an enthusiastic 3<sup>rd</sup> grade teacher was to summon up the courage of their 30 or so class members to designate a waterbody as a Tier 3 nomination. It might be a great class writing assignment, but it would hardly go without considerable collateral damage. Tier 3 designations will affect entire watersheds and ultimately marine transitions. No further degradations of the water quality beyond the established baselines will be allowed and although there is some conversation about “grandfathering” existing permits, there is no guarantee that these existing permits would be renewed. Some of these permits are only for a couple of years. The potential for tremendous collateral damage to existing infrastructure, municipalities and villages could be devastating. It is imperative that the process be cautious, ponderous and full of deliberation. The requirement for commissioners of DEC, DNR and ADF&G to unanimously agree that the waterbody qualifies for Tier 3 designation and that agreement then advances the nomination for Legislative consideration is paramount for a proper check and balance system between public input, regulators, and finally Legislators. Alaska has done an excellent job of managing its natural resources through a rigorous scientific and public review process. Now is not the time to cave to the political pressures of the public’s whims. Now is the time to protect the integrity of Alaska’s tradition of rigorous scientific based decisions regarding its natural resources.

Thank you for your hard work on this difficult and historic issue.

Michael Mackowiak