



April 15th, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Stutes and members of the Alaska House Fisheries Committee:

Salmon Beyond Borders is a community driven campaign, partnering with local Alaska businesses, fishing leaders, tour operators, and lawmakers, working in close coordination with Southeast Alaska tribes and First Nations in British Columbia (B.C.), to defend and sustain the transboundary Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers. These three rivers originate in Northwest B.C. and drain out into Southeast Alaska, serving as the largest salmon-producing systems in the region, and contributing to the \$1 million annual salmon fishery and \$1 million annual visitor industry for Southeast Alaska's economy.

Because of the international nature of these rivers, **Salmon Beyond Borders supports House Resolution 8: International Year of the Salmon (IYS)**, the global initiative to advance scientific research and opportunities for collaboration to ensure the resilience of salmon and people throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Ultimately, Salmon Beyond Borders maintains that these IYS goals will contribute towards efforts to better establish salmon management and policies in Alaska and British Columbia that are rooted in sound science and information.

In February 2019, on the heels of new federal funding for water quality research in U.S.-B.C. transboundary rivers, Salmon Beyond Borders joined with Senator Murkowski, Fishing leaders and Alaska lawmakers, who were in town for annual and legislative meetings, to launch the International Year of the Salmon in the capital city. The launch event featured a brief program, with remarks from multiple community leaders – we would like to share those remarks with you, to highlight the broad support for IYS, especially as it relates to the transboundary Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers.

Please see quotes highlighted below:

Senator Lisa Murkowski (address to Alaska Legislature, in response to Rep. Ortiz's question regarding the international AK-B.C. transboundary rivers issue):

“We are making some headway on different levels. From the appropriations perspective, we were able to include additional money for more water monitoring gauges in the Unuk River area. That's an important part of what it is that we do. The ongoing discussions between Alaska and Canada have been important...we need to make sure that with the new administration here in Juneau, that they are continuing to work those efforts.”

Mayor David Landis of Ketchikan (also a member of Alaska Municipal League and UFA):

“I think every single municipality of any size in Southeast Alaska has signed a resolution asking for cooperation between the Canadian and US governments on this transboundary issue. So, this is a call for cooperation, because of the downstream effect of the mining issues, we are, speaking on behalf of all of the municipalities, if I can do that, and we are very happy with the International Year of the Salmon efforts and especially in regard to research. In my day job, I work in fisheries, I work in salmon enhancement. To us research equals science and science is what we base our decisions on; we can't let things get wrapped around these political axles all the time. We need to get back to science and research is something that we support very strongly, that is how we'll get to the future.”

Sue Doherty, Executive Director of Southeast Alaska Seiners Association and UFA Board Member spoke on behalf of UFA, reading a statement from UFA ED, Frances Leach:

“Our mission is to promote and protect Alaska’s commercial fishing industry as a vital component of Alaska’s social and economic wellbeing. UFA works with communities throughout Alaska to promote healthy fisheries resources by supporting research, habitat, and habitat protection, and to support adequate funding for fisheries research...We are so excited to celebrate International Year of the Salmon, especially here in Southeast, home of the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk-Nass Rivers, which serve as economic powerhouses to Alaska communities and the Pacific Northwest as a whole. We support research in these watersheds, and we join with communities and lawmakers who call for binding financial assurances and enforceable protection to defend Alaska and our billion-dollar salmon fisheries from upstream development in Canada.”

Jill Weitz, Salmon Beyond Borders Campaign Director:

“Our Congressional Delegation been really strong on the need for research, and Senator Murkowski has been, especially as it relates to advancing the needs for research in transboundary watersheds. The last few years, we’ve been working with the Senator and her staff to get research dollars so that USGS can install stream gauges in U.S.-B.C. transboundary rivers, and just last week, the Interior Appropriations bill was signed by President Trump and that allocated \$1.5 million dollars for USGS to work with state agencies and local tribes that are already doing water quality work. We are incredibly thankful for her staff, the Senator herself, and members of Congress who also supported this work.”

Brandon Howard, owner of Amalga Distillery:

“We’re proud to get to support and do anything we can, we are a community, we love our community, and for over 10,000 years, salmon has been this state’s most valuable renewable resource and we would like to see it go on in perpetuity - and if Maura and I can stand behind all of you, and advocate for this cause... we know that it’s right. It’s something that we are really passionate about.”

Salmon Beyond Borders thanks the Alaska House Fisheries Committee, Representative Tarr for introducing this resolution in Alaska, and the members who support advancing the overarching IYS goal to “raise awareness about what humans can do to better ensure salmon and their habitat are conserved and restored” for generations to come.

Please let me know if you have questions or would like to learn more about Salmon Beyond Borders.

Sincerely,
Jill Weitz

Director
[Salmon Beyond Borders](#)
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