

From: [REDACTED]
To: [House Fisheries](#)
Subject: I support HB 54 Invasive Species Management.
Date: Thursday, March 18, 2021 1:02:08 AM

Dear House Fisheries Committee members.

I am a retired ADFG Biologist living in Dillingham Alaska.

The last 15 of my 22 years with the department was spent as assistant and then area biologist for the Bristol Bay Area Sport Fisheries.

Those waters and really all other parts of Alaska support fisheries all Alaskans cherish and depend on from subsistence to commercial to sport uses.

All Alaskans want to see the waters, the fish populations, and their ecosystems protected and perpetuated.

I am glad to see the Legislature moving to elevate the concerns for invasive species that may threaten our valuable resources.

There have been concerns for whirling disease, rock snot, invasive plants like elodea and others.

We have examples of the pike in the Susitna drainage, and the "perch was it?" and pike on the Kenai Peninsula.

Alaska Black fish have appeared in waters around Anchorage.

Currently we are seeing warnings about moss balls that may harbor the highly damaging zebra mussel that has been an expensive nightmare in parts of the lower 48.

We also have to educate the public to discourage what's call "bucket biologists", unwitting individuals who take it upon themselves to introduce new species to waters.

In my 22 year career, I had several people inquire about importing Walleye Pike to Alaska! A couple people were quite insistent and very hard to convince that walleyes should remain in their original habitat.

These proposed introductions were for waters in Unalaska and the Bristol Bay area!

Various agencies, especially National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service have been watching carefully for the appearance of elodea and other invasives in Bristol Bay waters under their jurisdictions.

Additionally I have suspicions but no clear evidence that some people took it upon themselves to move rainbow trout into a lake near Dillingham that was not known to support the species before the late 1980's. By the late 1990's I was hearing of people catching rainbow trout when they had expected to catch the char long known to live in the lake.

A small fishery has grown out of this and no harm has been detected to date. But these kind of actions have been known to have terrible consequences many places in the world.

While this is a land based example, it shows how suddenly an invasive can move in. When the highway from Dillingham to Aleknagik was paved, the shoulders were seeded about 1998? - we now have a yellow flowering weed (either yellow sow thistle or a yellow hawkweed) that has exploded along most roadways and is moving into yards and driveways. It is not easily killed. In a local gravel pit I have found a single non-native long needled pine tree growing that I suspect arrived as a seed on dirt attached to some sort of earth moving equipment. Orange hawkweed has appeared around Dillingham as well.

With the ability to travel from the waters of one state to Alaska waters in less than 24 hours, the steady visitor traffic via vehicles and boats on the ferry and highway systems, and the increasing average annual temperatures observed, we are increasingly vulnerable to intentional and accidental introductions.

We don't need a fish or invasive species disaster in Alaska.

Thank you for working to develop a program to "arm" Alaska to fend off these threats.
I support HB 54 for these reasons.

thank you

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