



# Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

1008 Fish Creek Rd

Juneau, AK 99801

Email: [kathy@seafa.org](mailto:kathy@seafa.org)

Phone: 907-586-6652

Cell Phone: 907-465-7666

Fax: 907-917-5470

Website: <http://www.seafa.org>

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February 22, 2021

House Special Committee on Fisheries

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair

Alaska State Legislature

State Capitol, Room, Room 120

Juneau, AK 99811

## RE: SUPPORT for HB 80

Dear Representative Stutes, Chair and Fisheries Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) **strongly supports the passage of HB 80** to resume collecting a reduced sport fish surcharge for the purposes of sport fishing enhancement and maintenance of sport fish facilities. HB 80 would continue to support ADF&G's sport fish enhancement projects of nearly 7.2 million fish into 270 remote release locations annually throughout the State as the previous surcharge expired Jan 1, 2021. Of particular importance to SEAFA is the \$0.5 million in funding support (previous license surcharge) provided to SE hatcheries (DIPAC & SSRAA) for Chinook, coho and rainbow trout releases in Southeast Alaska. Without these funds, these projects particularly the Chinook are in jeopardy of being discontinued.

While the legislation, if passed, has an enactment date of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the funding most likely would not be appropriated until FY 23 leaving both DIPAC and SSRAA short of funds for sport fish enhancement projects in FY 22. Southeast had an extremely poor salmon season in the summer of 2020, creating funding shortfalls for the associations and the timing of the enactment of this legislation and collection of funds also creates the need for a one-time funding source for FY22.

**It is critical that HB 80 passes this session to provide for the continued funding of sport fish enhancement and maintenance of sport fish hatcheries** into the future. These enhancement projects provide a substantial amount of Chinook opportunity in Southeast Alaska attracting fishermen from out of state for fishing related tourism supporting economic development for the cost of only a small surcharge on a fishing license.

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance is a multi-gear/multi-species non-profit commercial fishing association representing our 300+ members involved in the salmon, crab, shrimp and longline fisheries in Southeast and the Gulf of Alaska. Most of our members also participate in sport and personal use fisheries in their spare time.

Please support passage of HB 80 this session. Thank you for your consideration of our position on this important piece of legislation to continue these programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Hansen", followed by a long horizontal line.

Kathy Hansen  
Executive Director