



Alaska Trollers Association

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February 23, 2021

Honorable Speaker Stutes, Chair
House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: HB 80 SPT FSH HATCHERY FACIL ACCT; SURCHARGE

Dear Fisheries Committee,

Alaska Trollers Association (ATA) represents the many power and hand trollers throughout Southeast Alaska and up to, and including, Yakutat. Our membership exceeds 400 and is 85% Alaska resident so trollers are an important and big part of the Southeast Alaska economy. We support HB 80, a bill that will reinstate the lapsed sportfish license surcharge in order to help pay for hatchery projects, some of which benefit us.

It is our understanding that HB 247, similar legislation, was introduced and passed out of this committee last session, and was intended to provide a continuation of this funding source to ADFG since the original law was set to sunset. However, in the pandemic confusion at the end of last session, final passage of HB 247 did not happen as with the companion legislation, SB 189. Accordingly the department and hatcheries face a significant gap in the funding timeline and this unanticipated gap is problematic for SE hatchery projects. We therefore also support any stop-gap funding mechanism that may be employed this session at the next committee of referral, House Finance.

Further, it has been suggested that this bill be amended to ensure that a proportion of license fees collected be directed towards projects in the geographic region where collected. Although this may exceed ADFG's data parameters, a method should be devised to estimate this as some have expressed that the surcharge that recently sunset was disproportionately spent on South Central hatchery projects. Southeast projects, particularly those of SSRAA, are in serious funding need.

ATA appreciates you hearing HB 80. Although we have provided comments on possible improvements to it, these can be addressed in Finance Committee(s) and we support moving it forward as written as well.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amy Daugherty', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Amy Daugherty
Executive Director