



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Fish & Game &  
Department of Natural Resources

February 6, 2022

The Honorable Sarah Vance  
Alaska State House of Representatives  
State Capitol Room 424  
Juneau AK, 99801

Representative Vance,

As the Commissioners of Natural Resources and Fish & Game, we submit this letter in support of House Bill 52 (HB 52).

HB 52 proposes removing approximately 123.45 acres from Kachemak Bay State Park (KBSP), including uplands surrounding the Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (the Hatchery) and portions of Tutka Bay Lagoon under certain provisions. HB 52, as written, would also add three parcels, totaling approximately 266.67 acres, to KBSP in the Cottonwood-Eastland unit of the park. The net effect of HB 52 would add double the acreage to the state park that is proposed for removal.

The changes proposed in HB 52 present clear benefits to the public interest, from a legal, wildlife management, and public lands perspective.

First, the Department of Natural Resources believes the Hatchery's current operations constitutes an unconstitutional disposal of state park lands in violation of Article VIII, Section 7 of the Alaska Constitution. Removing the uplands and portions of Tutka Bay Lagoon from Kachemak Bay State Park as listed in HB 52 would resolve this disposal problem, and thus allow the Hatchery to continue.

Second, removing these lands and waters from KBSP resolves a long-standing management issue for the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Currently, the Division is tasked with managing a hatchery on state park lands, which is the only place in Alaska this occurs. By removing the lands in HB 52 from within KPSB, the Division would no longer manage the hatchery operations within the lagoon. Instead, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game could coordinate with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water and likely coordinate management of the hatchery via the two departments' procurement procedures.

There is a revert provision in HB 52: if the Alaska Department of Fish and Game ceases hatchery operations in the specified lands for three years, those lands will automatically return as part of Kachemak Bay State Park. We find this provision appropriate and a strong compromise that balances the interests of the varied public policy considerations.

Irrespective of the reversion language being triggered, the proposed additional lands to KBSP are in the public interest. Those proposed parcels are contiguous, with a portion of

KBSP on the north side of Kachemak Bay about 17 miles northeast of Homer near East End Road. These new lands would provide much needed road-based access to the underutilized Cottonwood Eastland unit of the park offering enhanced recreational opportunities.

The interface of marine habitats and recreational lands can be a contentious issue in Alaskan communities amongst concerned stakeholder groups. The Departments of Natural Resources and Fish & Game appreciate your sponsorship of HB 52, which proposes an amicable solution to this land management issue.

Sincerely,



Corri Feige, DNR Commissioner



Doug Vincent-Lang, ADF&G Commissioner