



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

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March 31, 2021

Representative Geran Tarr, Chair
House Special Committee on Fisheries
State Capitol, Room 120
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 64

Dear Representative Tarr, Chair and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFa) does not have a position on this legislation but looks forward to the presentation of the bill as well as presentations and comments on the legislation from CFEC and ADF&G. We totally understand the difficulty in developing a new fishery in the State complicated by the State's current fiscal situation. So, we applaud the attempt to address the issue of developing new fisheries, but we have questions about how the legislation would work and if it actually would allow a new fishery to develop or have the same and or different hurdles as with the current "new and developing fisheries policy" developed by the Board of Fish.

- Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA) successfully built and used a similar model but after the fishery had been started so they knew who the pool of participants was to conduct an election. The science for the fishery to be conducted was raised by participants and processors and we believe some State general and capital appropriations.
- Generally, ADF&G will not open a new fishery until some science regarding the fishery resource being developed is conducted. Under this legislation, there wouldn't be funds for the science until the fishery is operated and an assessment is being collected. A



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 31, 2021

Representative Geran Tarr, Chair
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 128
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Support HB 64 – Fisheries Development Associations, Assessment

Dear Chair Tarr and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska supports HB 64: An Act relating to regional fisheries development associations; and related to developing fishery management assessments. Over the last several years, commercial fishermen have seen a steady decline to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Commercial Fisheries Division budget, which is disappointing since our annual taxes and fees commercial fishermen pay to the state is more than four times the Commercial Fisheries Division budget. Nonetheless, we continue to see the commercial fisheries budget either flat-funded or reduced, leaving an impact on our fisheries.

One of the first areas to be cut in the Division of Commercial Fisheries is monies used for test fisheries. Test fisheries are extremely vital to the success of our commercial fisheries. Test fisheries are used to expand experimental fisheries, thus opening the door to new fisheries which will in turn boost our economy. More importantly, test fisheries monitor for sustainability which allows for scientific-based prosecution and expansion of fisheries.

This bill would allow stakeholders in a developing fishery to form a regional fishery development association. Once an association is formed, the members of the association would be able to establish a landing tax and provide revenue to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to conduct surveys specific to that fishery. Currently, this mechanism is only available to dive fisheries in Alaska and it has proven to be a success.

The key takeaways from this bill is the ability for new fisheries to be self-funded and it will generate revenue for the State's general fund via landing taxes all within a sustainable manner based on science.

Thank you for your consideration,

Regards,

Matt Alward
President

Frances H. Leach
Executive Director