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Alaska State Legislature

Angoon, Craig, Edna Bay, Elfin Cove, Hollis, Hoonah, Hydaburg, Kake, Kasaan, Klawock, Kupreanof, Naukati, Pelican, Petersburg, Port Alexander, Point Baker, Port Protection, Sitka, South Thorne Bay, Tenakee Springs, Thorne Bay & Yakutat

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HJR 05: ALASKA FISHERIES; TROLL FISHERIES

CS(FSH) Version U

“Urging the United States Secretary of Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other federal and state agencies to defend the state’s fisheries, including the Southeast Alaska troll fishery.”

The Southeast Alaska troll salmon fishery is threatened by a lawsuit filed by the Washington State-based Wild Fish Conservancy. House Joint Resolution 5 calls on the Federal Government and State of Alaska to continue to defend the Southeast Alaska troll fishery and do everything within their power to keep the fishery open should the judge rule in the Wild Fish Conservancy’s favor.

With overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, this suit seeks to hold the Southeast Alaska troll fishery responsible for the decline in southern resident killer whales, about 1000 miles to the south. While scientists estimate the trollers may take 3% of the Chinook salmon destined for rivers important to the southern resident killer whales, the lawsuit does not take into account threats from the pollution and habitat degradation in the home waters of the southern resident killer whales. Trolling is a low barrier, sustainable fishery where fishermen from nearly every community in Southeast Alaska catch each fish with hook and line. With approximately 1450 trollers contributing over \$85 million to the economies of coastal Alaska it is imperative the state defend this fishery, while continuing to support the scientific research that is foundational to good policy and good law.

If the Wild Fish Conservancy is successful with this lawsuit it will set a dangerous precedent for a broad range of Alaska’s fisheries. House Joint Resolution 5 urges the State of Alaska and Federal Government to do all they can to keep our sustainable fisheries in Alaska open.