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Governor Mike Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

January 24, 2024

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Stevens:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18 of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to electronic monitoring (i.e., video cameras and gear sensors that capture information on fishing location and catch) of fishing vessels. State law provides authority for the Board of Fisheries (Board) to establish by regulation onboard observer programs for fishing vessels in fisheries based on its determination that enumerated criteria are met. The Commissioner of the Department Fish and Game (DFG) is authorized to implement an onboard observer program required by the Board. This bill would authorize the Board to require electronic monitoring as an alternative or additional option to onboard observers in State fisheries and would authorize the Commissioner of DFG to implement electronic monitoring programs required by the Board.

Electronic monitoring has been increasingly adopted to collect catch data in Federal fisheries. While onboard observers have traditionally been the primary way to collect independent information on a vessel's activities and catch, placing observers on vessels can create challenges due to the additional cost and space required onboard. Electronic monitoring offers an efficient, less intrusive, and more cost-effective alternative. Establishing the Board and DFG's ability to implement an electronic monitoring program now would allow use of current technologies while positioning the State to use new technologies once they are widely available.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Dunleavy".

Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure