



Hunter McIntosh, President
The Boat Company
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The Honorable Representative Louise Stutes
The Honorable Representative Rebecca Himschook
House Fisheries Committee
Alaska State Capitol
House of Representatives
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

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Submitted via email to: Representative.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov;
Representative.Rebecca.Himschook@akleg.gov; House.Fisheries@akleg.gov

Re: House Concurrent Resolution No. 1: A Resolution Establishing the Joint Legislative Task Force on Sport Fishing Service Providers in 1 Southeast Alaska.

House Fisheries Committee:

I submit the following letter in support of establishing a task force for sport fishing service providers in Southeast Alaska on behalf of The Boat Company. The Boat Company is a small cruise vessel eco-tour company that has been operating in Southeast Alaska for over forty years, providing visitors with scenic views of Southeast Alaska coastlines, fjords and forests, hiking, beach combing, wildlife viewing, guided sport fishing, and other unique Southeast Alaska experiences since 1980. The Boat Company's two vessels rotate out of Sitka and Juneau each weekend during the summer, each bringing twenty to twenty-four visitors who enjoy local harbors, fishing fleets, retailers and restaurants. We conduct five day trips in Southeast Alaska's Inside Passage waterways on two vessels, the 20 passenger M/V Liseron and the 24 passenger M/V Mist Cove.

Our tours are somewhat unique because we combine multi-day eco-tour activities with guided sportfishing in skiffs deployed from the larger vessels. Guests have varied interests but in general, sport-fishing activities occur for three or four days per trip. Fishing activities and target species are diverse: saltwater and freshwater fishing for several salmon species, freshwater fishing for trout, and bottom fishing for ling cod, rockfish, and halibut. The Boat Company markets the fishing experience in general for both experienced and novice anglers.

Southeast Alaska fishing opportunities are highly important for residents and visitors and regional economic drivers. For many guests, the opportunity to catch Southeast Alaska salmon is a highlight of their Alaska experience. Also, increasing numbers of our guests are pescatarian. We proudly serve Southeast Alaska salmon delivered to our vessels that are harvested by local commercial fishermen in Sitka. In recent years, there have been multiple factors that have reduced the availability of fishery resources for all Southeast Alaska

fishermen – whether commercial, sport or for food security. Our operation now faces day of the week closures for guided halibut fishing, much shorter Chinook retention seasons and lower limits for other species. Southeast Alaska commercial and traditional fisheries are facing similar challenges. As pointed out in the Resolution, problems related to the concentration of sport fishing service providers is likely to emerge first in Southeast Alaska. From The Boat Company’s perspective, these problems are present – unmanaged growth in some sport sectors, including unguided boat rentals, has increased overall pressure and is destabilizing existing personal use sport, guided sport and commercial fisheries.

On behalf of The Boat Company, I thank the House Fisheries Committee for developing and considering a task force aimed at improving conditions for all regional fisheries. The Boat Company is a non-profit, conservation foundation that has worked for forty-five years to promote the conservation of halibut, salmon and other marine species and their habitat. I would be willing to serve on the task force as a public member in a conservation capacity should that opportunity arise.

Thank you,

Hunter McIntosh
President, The Boat Company