

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

February 22, 2008

8:39 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair  
Representative Kyle Johansen  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Lindsey Holmes

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux  
Representative Bryce Edgmon

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEW: ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME COMMERCIAL FISH  
DIVISION: SALMON MANAGEMENT, SALMON OVER ESCAPEMENT AND FOREGONE  
HARVEST VALUATION

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 134

"An Act relating to conservation and protection of wild salmon  
production in drainages affecting the Bristol Bay Fisheries  
Reserve; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 134

SHORT TITLE: PROTECTION OF SALMON SPAWNING WATER

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) EDGMON

02/14/07	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/14/07	(H)	FSH, RES
02/28/07	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124
02/28/07	(H)	Heard & Held
02/28/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
03/02/07	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124
03/02/07	(H)	Heard & Held
03/02/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
03/05/07	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124

03/05/07	(H)	Heard & Held
03/05/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
05/09/07	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124
05/09/07	(H)	Heard & Held
05/09/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
09/24/07	(H)	FSH AT 4:30 PM Newhalen
09/24/07	(H)	Heard & Held
09/24/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
09/25/07	(H)	FSH AT 2:00 PM Naknek
09/25/07	(H)	Heard & Held
09/25/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
09/26/07	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM Dillingham
09/26/07	(H)	Heard & Held
09/26/07	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
02/18/08	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124
02/18/08	(H)	Heard & Held
02/18/08	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
02/20/08	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124
02/20/08	(H)	Heard & Held
02/20/08	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
02/22/08	(H)	FSH AT 8:30 AM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

PATTI NELSON, Deputy Director  
 Division of Commercial Fisheries  
 Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview entitled "Division of Commercial Fisheries, Salmon Management Overview," and responded to questions.

GERON BRUCE, Assistant Director  
 Division of Commercial Fisheries  
 Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview entitled "Salmon escapements compared to goals and potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value," and responded to questions.

VAL ANGASAN  
 Dillingham, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 134.

WASSILLIE ILUTSIK  
 Aleknagik, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 134.

STEVEN ANGASAN  
Naknek Village Council  
Naknek, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 134.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

**CHAIR PAUL SEATON** called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at [8:39:26 AM](#). Representatives Seaton, Wilson, Johnson, and Johansen were present at the call to order. Representative Holmes arrived as the meeting was in progress.

OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF FISH & GAME COMMERCIAL FISH DIVISION

CHAIR SEATON announced that the first order of business would be an overview on salmon management, salmon over escapement, and foregone harvest valuation by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game Commercial Fish Division.

[8:41:04 AM](#)

PATTI NELSON, Deputy Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), turned the committee's attention to a Powerpoint presentation entitled "Division of Commercial Fisheries, Salmon Management Overview." She reported that the emphasis of this presentation was on escapement-based management. She explained that her presentation would include: the importance of commercial salmon fisheries in Alaska, the relevant policies of escapement goal management, the process of escapement goal development, the role of Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) and the Board of Fisheries (BOF) in commercial salmon management, and ADF&G recommendations to improve the management.

[8:43:00 AM](#)

MS. NELSON discussed slide 4 which summarized the statewide salmon catches and exvessel values for all Alaskan salmon species from 1878-2007. She reported that the 10 year average of salmon sold by Alaskan commercial fisherman was almost 173 million fish with an exvessel value of \$284 million, while for 2007, the commercial harvest was more than 212 million fish with an exvessel value of \$374 million. She said that exvessel values have been increasing since 2002. She directed attention to slides 5-9, which showed the harvest and exvessel value for

each of the Alaska salmon species during the 1878-2007 time period. On slide 5, Ms. Nelson noted, "Alaska commercial pink salmon catches and value" shows the 10 year average for pink salmon to be 112 million fish with an exvessel value of \$50 million. She elaborated that the 2007 pink salmon commercial harvest of 144 million fish was the third highest on record. She pointed out that the harvest seems to fluctuate, with the odd years being dominant. She reviewed slide 6, which shows the "Alaska commercial sockeye catches and value." She reported that sockeye salmon are the second most numerous commercial catch, as well as the third most abundant salmon species in the Pacific Ocean. The 10-year average for the Alaskan sockeye salmon commercial catch has been 36 million fish with an exvessel value of \$157 million. She added that the 2007 exvessel value of \$206 million was the highest since 1999.

8:46:11 AM

MS. NELSON noted that slide 7 reflected the commercial chum salmon catch and value, adding that chums are the third most numerous commercial catch species and the second most abundant species. She stated that the 10-year average for chum salmon catch has been 18 million, with an exvessel value of \$33 million.

8:46:29 AM

MS. NELSON introduced slide 8, "Alaska commercial coho salmon..." and declared coho salmon to be the fourth most numerous commercial catch, as well as the fourth most abundant species. She noted that the 10-year coho catch average is 4.5 million fish, with an average exvessel value of \$20 million. Slide 9 shows the graph for chinook salmon, which are the least abundant species, and the least numerous commercial catch. The average for the last 10 years has been 560,000 fish, with an average exvessel value of \$17 million. She relayed that the magnitude of the commercial salmon fisheries allows ADF&G biologists to collect extensive information and statistics for use in managing the fisheries. Since statehood, ADF&G has implemented an escapement goal based fisheries management system to ensure adequate and appropriate escapement levels and sustained yields. Ms. Nelson pointed out that slide 10, "Providing for sustained yield," explains that the concept for sustained yield is based in the Alaska State Constitution, and the commissioner of ADF&G is vested with powers based in statute, AS 16.05.020(2). She explained that the legislature created the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to provide for an

open public process and to give direction to ADF&G. The BOF develops fishery management plans, allocates resources among the users, and promulgates regulations to provide for sustained salmon yield.

[8:48:26 AM](#)

MS. NELSON called attention to slide 11, which detailed the regulations for "Providing for sustained yield." She stated that these regulations for sustained yield include salmon fisheries management plans, the Policy for the Management of Mixed Stock Salmon Fisheries, management of the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy, and management of the Policy for Statewide Salmon Escapement Goals.

[8:48:54 AM](#)

MS. NELSON referred to slide 12, titled "Escapement Goals," and explained that the two types of escapement goals are Biological Escapement Goal (BEG) and Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG). She described the BEG as the level of escapement that provides the greatest potential for a maximum sustained yield, and the SEG as a level of escapement that is known to provide for a sustained yield over a 5 to 10 year period. The SEG is indicated by an index or an escapement estimate and is used in situations where a BEG cannot be estimated.

[8:49:45 AM](#)

MS. NELSON reviewed slide 13, titled "Escapement Goal Review." She said that it is ADF&G's duty to conserve and develop the Alaska salmon fisheries on the sustained yield principle, so ADF&G teams routinely review and develop escapement goals. She explained that these review teams include staff from the Division of Commercial Fisheries and the Division of Sport Fish, and they determine the appropriate goal type, BEG or SEG, for each management area salmon stock based on the quality and quantity of available data. Each team determines the appropriate method to evaluate the escapement goal, estimates the escapement goal for each stock, and makes a recommendation to the directors; then, ADF&G discusses the management area reviews with the BOF.

[8:51:23 AM](#)

MS. NELSON turned to slide 14, "Methods", and discussed the various BEG and SEG methods to attain either of these goals.

She outlined the BEG methods to include spawner-recruit analysis, yield per recruit analysis, and habitat based models. The SEG methods included percentile, risk analysis, spawning habitat, smolts per spawner, and limnology models.

[8:51:42 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked which method, the BEG or the SEG, is most often used.

MS. NELSON responded that the majority are SEG.

CHAIR SEATON asked her to discuss the composition of the inter-department teams.

MS. NELSON explained that when the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy was implemented in 2000, one of the directives was for ADF&G to document and review all of the existing escapement goals. After compiling the information, ADF&G spent three years reviewing each of the goals, comparing the data, and analyzing its quality to determine either a BEG or an SEG. These 10-person teams are comprised of management biologists from the Division of Sport Fish, the Division of Commercial Fisheries, and the office of the Chief Fisheries Scientist. The teams meet at least seven times in preparation for their analysis and report. She mentioned that the report is sent to the regional supervisors and then forwarded to the directors for evaluation and approval.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN raised a question regarding a personal use fishery near Ketchikan which is in conflict with a future commercial fishery and asked if this is a type of issue the teams would discuss.

MS. NELSON explained that the teams are formed to evaluate and estimate escapement goals.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN opined that there is a lot of misinformation about the decision-making process responding to conflicts between commercial and personal use fisheries.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked for a designation of the areas covered by the team decisions.

MS. NELSON explained that in most cases, the decisions for sockeye and coho are made for individual streams or systems,

while district and area-wide management goals are made for pink and chum salmon.

[9:00:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked what the ratio is for BEG managed to SEG managed areas.

MS. NELSON replied that it is difficult and costly to collect all the necessary data for BEG, but that the SEG is still scientifically based with good data. She allowed that the ratio is less than 50:50.

[9:02:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked if there is a comparison of BEG to SEG when both are available for an area.

MS. NELSON stated that when an escapement goal is established it is either biological or sustainable, based on the available data. She explained that if there is enough data to estimate for a BEG, that is the escapement goal they recommend and manage for. She said the department is continually reviewing and refining these goals.

[9:05:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked if there is a list of area management by type.

MS. NELSON said that she will get the committee that list.

CHAIR SEATON posed that when there is a stream with enough yield per recruit data, would ADF&G use that information as opposed to doing a spawning habitat or a smolts per spawner analysis.

MS. NELSON said that ADF&G tries to use all the available data. She stated that if there is data to support a BEG, and data to support an SEG, then the department will run analyses to see if these corroborate each other. She noted that if the analyses are very different, then ADF&G will review the reason, and conduct more research.

[9:06:53 AM](#)

MS. NELSON turned the committee's attention back to slide 15, "Salmon Escapement Enumeration," and described the enumeration

methods to monitor escapement goals. These methods include aerial surveys, weirs, counting towers, sonar, and foot surveys.

[9:08:00 AM](#)

MS. NELSON referred to slide 16, "Harvest Management" and explained that ADF&G manages and monitors the commercial harvest. She reported that the management is done in the field, not from the central office, and that local fishery managers are given the authority to open and close fisheries to ensure the adequate escapement of spawning stocks and the allocation of fish to various user groups based on the BOF management plans.

[9:08:37 AM](#)

MS. NELSON referred to slide 17, "Alaska Board of Fisheries," and said that the main role of the BOF is to conserve and develop the state fishery resources. She said that this involves setting seasons, bag limits, and methods and means for the subsistence, commercial, sport, guided sport, and personal use fisheries. The BOF establishes policy, direction, and allocation for the state's fishery resources and these become the responsibility of ADF&G for management.

[9:09:02 AM](#)

MS. NELSON explained that the BOF develops the management plans during open public meetings, after considering public testimony and advice from the various scientists, advisors, fisherman, and user interest groups. She allowed that the objective is to improve the regulations to better meet the escapement and allocation goals. She pointed to slide 18, "Recent Regulatory Intent Language," which reflected modification to an existing regulation.

[9:12:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked for an explanation of the process to get information to the commissioner, when a quick response is necessary.

MS. NELSON explained that during the season, an area manager works with assistants and researchers to maintain daily estimates for escapement and harvest. If an area manager feels the necessity to alter the existing plan, they will meet with the regional supervisor and staff, who can then bring it to the attention of the directors and the commissioner. The

commissioner has weekly meetings on specific fisheries throughout the season and can have teleconference meetings with the area managers and the regional staff, as often as necessary.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked for the location of the area and regional managers.

9:15:33 AM

MS. NELSON explained that the area manager and staff for the upper Cook Inlet sport and commercial fisheries are in Soldotna, and they are in the field everyday during the season. She relayed that the regional supervisor and the management coordinator are in Anchorage, but they spend a lot of time in the specific fisheries, including Bristol Bay, Soldotna, and Prince William Sound. The commissioner is located in Juneau, but is travelling a lot during the peak season. She explained that the director of the Division of Commercial Fisheries is in Anchorage, and she, the deputy director, is in Juneau. She reported that all the management staff visit the various fisheries during the peak season. She pointed out that an emergency order is approved by the commissioner and the news is released by the area manager.

9:18:25 AM

MS. NELSON said that ADF&G is always looking for ways to improve management capabilities, as noted on slide 19: "Recommendations." She explained that they look forward to developing and validating methods to determine carrying capacity of salmon stocks, especially stocks with high harvest rates. They can then better determine the effects of over escapement. She observed that they are working to improve the tools for preseason and in-season forecasting of run strength to allow timely decisions to avoid foregone harvests. She said the continued health of the salmon fishing industry in Alaska is somewhat dependent on external forces. She stated that ADF&G continues to improve their research and management because Alaska's economy, culture, and identity are shaped by salmon.

9:20:53 AM

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON commented that the populations of Southeast Alaska and the Cook Inlet areas are growing, and this is going to put a greater pressure on the decisions affecting sport fishing.

MS. NELSON responded that the BOF will make the allocative decisions.

[9:22:33 AM](#)

GERON BRUCE, Assistant Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), said that his presentation is a follow up to Ms. Nelson, and will allow for a better understanding of the ADF&G process.

[9:23:13 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE explained that ADF&G is continually evaluating its program to measure success and improvement. He said that the development of performance goals, specifically escapement goals, is a way for the legislature and the general public to measure the success and benefits of the commercial fisheries. He reported that there are many variables, some natural, some economic, some information based, which restrict perfection in the attainment of the escapement goals.

[9:24:27 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE turned the committee's attention to slide 2 of his Powerpoint presentation, "Salmon escapements compared to goals...Statewide". He mentioned that ADF&G cannot monitor all of the salmon systems, so they have carefully chosen the 250-300 systems which ADF&G feel will serve as indices for the larger production areas. He directed attention to the chart, explaining that the data shows that during the years 2001-2007 ADF&G has met the escapement goals in all but 9-17 percent of the measured systems. He pointed out that he would like to focus on the "above upper goal" figures which reflect the potential unrealized values.

[9:26:30 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE pointed to slide 3, "Salmon escapements compared to goals... Region 1: Southeast," explaining that these graph levels will vary from region to region because of the differences with salmon species and management information in each region. In Southeast Alaska, pink salmon are the predominant species, and the escapement goals are generally managed as a unit and not individually.

[9:28:00 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE identified the sockeye and pink salmon tables on slide 4, "Potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value Region 1: Southeast," which reflect the number of fish and exvessel value above the escapement goals. In a 2007 comparison of harvest value to unrealized value, the sockeye harvest value was \$10 million with an unrealized value of \$421,000, while the pink salmon harvest value was \$30 million and the unrealized value was \$1.8 million.

[9:30:32 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE noted that slide 5, "Salmon escapements compared to goals... Region 2: Central," reflects the three major areas, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Bristol Bay. These areas monitor 90-100 stocks, with 6-16 percent falling below the minimum goals for escapement.

[9:31:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if there are areas that are consistently below minimum goals.

MR. BRUCE replied that the department does identify those areas and bring them to the attention of the managers for a determination as to why this is happening. If necessary, ADF&G will go to the BOF for regulatory action, as the Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy specifically addresses failure to reach minimum escapement goals.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked if there are any areas with consistent problems.

MR. BRUCE allowed that the department will generally find a solution and this can result in a harvest reduction. He expressed his belief that there is not an area where the escapement goal is not attained, though he allowed this can take a while with the longer-living salmon species.

CHAIR SEATON directed attention to the "Success in Achieving Salmon Escapement Goals in Monitored Systems" report for 2001-2007, which is included in the members' packets.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN noted that slide 5 illustrates that about 10 percent of the stocks are below the minimum goal for escapement.

MR. BRUCE explained that there is natural variability on the salmon returns. He allowed that this is not so much a problem as a feature of the variability, and the management system needs to be flexible and sensitive enough to identify and respond to these. He offered his belief that the ADF&G system has had a high level of success with this.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN agreed that the ADF&G management plan is flexible, and he asked if Mr. Bruce saw any chronic problem.

MR. BRUCE said that this is not a chronic problem, but a feature of salmon variability for which the management system adjusts. He elaborated that this is responding to circumstances. He noted that there can be systems that remain depressed for a time, and these require action to reduce the harvest and determine what is affecting the productivity. He mentioned some examples from prior years.

[9:36:53 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON commented that the trend reflects that the above escapement range percentage is moving toward inclusion within the escapement goal percentage.

[9:37:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if there is a correlation between the below minimum escapement and the above goal escapement percentages in each year.

MR. BRUCE offered his belief that the relationship of below and above goal percentages is reflective of large versus small salmon runs.

[9:41:01 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE directed attention to slide 6, "Potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value Region 2: Central," which revealed values for sockeye salmon in Copper River, Prince William Sound, Cook Inlet, and Bristol Bay. He explained that neither Copper River nor Prince William Sound reflected large exvessel value loss, but that Bristol Bay has shown a larger exvessel value loss in the last three years, as there were much larger salmon runs during those years. He reported that the complexity of the Cook Inlet system allowed a significant exvessel loss from 2004-2006. He pointed out the decrease in exvessel value lost in

2007, and he offered his belief that this is the beginning of the trend.

[9:43:57 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE referred to slide 7, "Potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value (continued) Region 2: Central," and pointed out that pink salmon in Prince William Sound only had one year, 2005, in which there was a significant above goal escapement, although the percentage of this exvessel value loss to the catch was small. He directed attention to the graph of Lower Cook Inlet, and offered his belief that it was the difficulty with access to remote areas as opposed to management constraint which allowed for a higher exvessel value loss.

[9:44:45 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE called attention to slide 8, "Salmon escapements compared to goals... Region 3: AYK," and explained that the systems are now moving into ranges of acceptability. He examined slide 9, "Potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value Region 3: AYK," and opined that due to remoteness, high operating cost, and recent low productivity, only the last few years has reflected a decrease in exvessel value loss.

CHAIR SEATON asked if this was due to either market or regulatory constraints.

MR. BRUCE opined that this was mainly due to market constraints, and the high cost of operation.

[9:48:18 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE commented that the region in slide 10, "Salmon escapements compared to goals... Region 4: WESTWARD," encompasses a very large area, including Kodiak, the north and south side of the Alaska Peninsula, and the Aleutian Islands.

[9:48:52 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE reviewed slide 11, "Potential unrealized harvest and exvessel value Region 4: WESTWARD," and commented that the exvessel value loss in each of the areas is decreasing.

[9:50:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN asked how to determine no-market value.

MR. BRUCE responded that this is a hypothetical calculation based on multiplying the average weight for a non-harvested fish times the average price paid for that salmon species in the region. However, if there is no market, then there is only the theoretical value based on creating a market.

CHAIR SEATON explained that theoretical value is calculated to help the management determine if either regulatory constraint or market constraint is creating the non use.

[9:53:20 AM](#)

MR. BRUCE pointed out that the final slide, "Alaska Commercial Salmon Catches and Value 1878-2007 (all species combined)" shows that the last 20 years of salmon catch and value have been the best ever. He offered his belief that the people of Alaska receive a good benefit from the management of the salmon resource.

[9:54:23 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON requested an analysis of the foregone value for major streams. He noted that this analysis will help explain whether this loss is due to a market or a regulatory decision. All of this information will generate better economic decisions for each region and help Alaska receive the maximum value of the resource.

[9:56:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked if there is anything in the ADF&G formula to indicate that catching an increased number of fish will bring down the price.

MR. BRUCE responded that there is not an attempt to adjust the price per pound based on an increased harvest. He expressed his belief that the exvessel value is such a small percentage of both the Alaska salmon catch and the worldwide farmed salmon market that he does not take this into consideration.

[9:58:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked if there is any regional adjustment for price.

MR. BRUCE said that he does take regional prices into account.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked what price value is used for the statewide average.

MR. BRUCE explained that the department does a calculation for the average price per pound of each species in each region.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON offered his belief that the number of fish lost to escapement does not necessarily correlate to a comparable lost amount of revenue. He said that he did not want management decisions to be based on an economic model for projected lost revenue.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN agreed that he would prefer not to take into account economic projections without all the factors.

[10:03:43 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON referred to the report in the members' packages titled, "Success in Achieving Salmon Escapement Goals in Monitored Systems-," which discusses each individual river system and the ADF&G appraisal of the constraints on the developments. He suggested that the committee members research any of the salmon regions for which they are concerned. He requested a follow up on the projected processing capacity report. He opined that this will allow the committee to identify any foregone harvests that are ongoing and need to be addressed.

[10:05:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON expressed concern with using lost economic opportunity instead of science and sustainability as a primary management factor.

MR. BRUCE responded that ADF&G does not use economic values as a tool. The department makes this information available for public input to the BOF, and the board may evaluate all of the input to construct their management plans.

[10:08:20 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON pointed out that although there is a constitutional obligation for the maximum benefit of resources, it is not limited to economic benefit, but also includes sport and other beneficial uses. He allowed that all of these factors need to be brought to the BOF when they establish the allocation

policies because the ADF&G cannot override the allocation decisions.

HB 134-PROTECTION OF SALMON SPAWNING WATER

[10:11:02 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 134, "An Act relating to conservation and protection of wild salmon production in drainages affecting the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve; and providing for an effective date."

[The motion to adopt CSHB 134, Version 25-LS0381\M, Kane, 2/22/07, was left pending at the 2/28/07 meeting.]

[The motion to adopt CSHB 134, Version 25-LS0381\O, Kane, 1/22/08 was left pending at the February 18, 2008 meeting.]

[10:11:22 AM](#)

VAL ANGASAN said that he opposes Version O, as it attempts to change land-use permits that date back to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). He asked that the committee not adopt measures which would impede, restrict, or prohibit current legal mining developments in Southwestern Alaska. He explained that the land selections in Alaska are premised on the economic value, including mineral deposits. He asked that the committee consult with the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to assure that the constituents concerns are addressed.

[10:14:42 AM](#)

WASSILLIE ILUTSIK said that he opposed HB 134 because it will put restrictions on the village corporations, and on private landowners, for any kind of economic development. He explained that there is very high unemployment in the villages. He related a story of his drinking the river water, with the water tasting like gasoline, and realized how many sport fishing boats are on the river.

[10:18:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked Mr. Ilutsik if he would support the bill if it banned all water pollutants, including outboard motors.

MR. ILUTSIK said he would like to see all water pollutants, including the outboard motors, eliminated.

[10:19:31 AM](#)

STEVEN ANGASAN, Naknek Village Council, said that Naknek is against HB 134. This bill would lead to "division in an already divided region." He asked if the legislature could pass regional-specific legislation. He explained that the economy of the area is in trouble, and HB 134 would ban economic opportunities. He relayed that seven to eight mines are in the development stages in the Bristol Bay region. He inquired if passage of the bill would exempt the mines already in development, or would the state pay compensation for the loss of economic development. He asked if there were studies as to the constitutionality of the laws.

[10:24:01 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON closed public testimony.

[HB 134 was held over.]

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:24 a.m.