

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

January 26, 2016

10:10 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair  
Representative Neal Foster  
Representative Bob Herron  
Representative Charisse Millett  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
Representative Dan Ortiz

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Craig Johnson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 177

"An Act relating to king salmon tags and king salmon tag designs."

- MOVED HB 177 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 220

"An Act relating to fish; and establishing a fisheries enhancement permit."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 177

SHORT TITLE: KING SALMON TAGS AND DESIGNS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) KELLER

04/01/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/01/15	(H)	FSH, RES
01/26/16	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM CAPITOL 120

BILL: HB 220

SHORT TITLE: FISH ENHANCEMENT PERMITS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TALERICO

01/19/16	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/16
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01/19/16 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/19/16 (H) FSH, RES  
01/26/16 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM CAPITOL 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced HB 177, as sponsor.

JIM POUND, Staff  
Representative Wes Keller  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HB 177, on behalf of Representative Keller, sponsor, and responded to questions.

KEVIN BROOKS, Deputy Commissioner  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Responded to questions, during the hearing on HB 177.

STEPHENIE WHEELER, Corporate Communications Officer  
Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing on HB 177.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID TALERICO  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced HB 220, as sponsor.

JOSHUA BANKS, Staff  
Representative David Talerico  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the sectional analysis for the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 220, on behalf of Representative Talerico, sponsor.

BRIAN ASHTON  
Wrangell, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing on HB 220.

WILL MAYO, Executive Director

Tribal Government and Client Services  
Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 220.

SARAH O'NEAL, Biologist  
University of Washington  
Seattle, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 220.

LINDSEY BLOOM  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified with concern for HB 220.

ALEXUS KWACHKA  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified with opposition to HB 220.

CHRIS BERNS  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified with concern for HB 220.

JOEL RANDRUP  
Commercial Fisherman  
Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 220

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Owner  
Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 220

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:10:39 AM](#)

**CHAIR LOUISE STUTES** called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. Representatives Stutes, Foster, Herron, and Millett were present at the call to order. Representatives Kreiss-Tomkins and Ortiz arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HB 177-KING SALMON TAGS AND DESIGNS**

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 177, "An Act relating to king salmon tags and king salmon tag designs."

[10:11:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER, Alaska State Legislature, introduced HB 177 stating that friendly negotiations are on-going with Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), regarding the fiscal note, and encouraged the committee's scrutiny.

[10:13:02 AM](#)

JIM POUND, Staff, Representative Wes Keller, Alaska State Legislature, said HB 177 is a means to generate funds for ADF&G. King salmon stamps will be marketed in a variety of venues including boat captains. Additionally, income from the sale of the art and associated merchandize will provide revenue targeted for the department's fish enhancement programs.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON referred to page 1, lines 11 and 12, noting that the submitted designs are restricted to Alaskan residents. He asked whether this stipulation is true of other stamps.

MR. POUND deferred.

[10:15:46 AM](#)

KEVIN BROOKS, Deputy Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), offered to provide further information.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON commented that Alaska hosts visitors, from around the world, including anglers seeking the opportunity to land a King salmon. Considering the scope for the reputation of Alaska's King salmon, he suggested promoting a global platform for artist solicitations.

MR. POUND answered that commissioning the art is considered to be an opportunity to hire locally.

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[10:18:02 AM](#)

STEPHENIE WHEELER, Corporate Communications Officer, Alaska Railroad (ARRC), reported that the Alaska Railroad has an annual

art print program conducted each November, restricted to Alaskan artists, with a contracting date sometime in March. Typically, the contract is for approximately \$3,000. The corporation receives the artwork by the end of the summer, allowing time for the merchandise to be produced for the holiday season. The hard costs for the program run about \$20,000, which includes: 3,000 posters, 800 signed and numbered artist prints, lapel pins, agency advertising, and sale events. Staff time of 175-200 hours is also a factor. The exercise isn't a significant revenue boost, but it offsets the costs, and is an extremely popular public relations program enjoyed by residents and visitors.

[The committee treated public testimony as closed.]

[10:21:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to report HB177, 29-LS0774\A, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. Without objection, so moved.

#

[10:21:52 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 10:22 a.m. to 10:27 a.m.

#### **HB 220-FISH ENHANCEMENT PERMITS**

[10:27:28 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 220, "An Act relating to fish; and establishing a fisheries enhancement permit."

[10:27:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 220, labeled 29-LS1039\N, Bullard, 1/21/16, as the working document. Without objection Version N was before the committee.

[10:28:40 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at ease.

[10:28:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID TALERICO, Alaska State Legislature, described the scope of the interior district, which he serves,

and the important watersheds it includes, from Tanana east to the Canadian border. Introducing the legislation, he paraphrased from the sponsor statement, which read [original punctuation provided]:

Fish have been one of the most valuable natural resources for Alaskans to harvest for recreation, business, and as a source of food. Most Alaskans want to see sustainable fisheries in the State so that all major user groups receive the benefits. Subsistence, commercial, and sport fishers have worked hard through the current fish management system to keep our fisheries strong. This system however, focuses more on how to maintain current fish levels instead of finding ways to increase fish for all users.

House Bill 220 will create another tool that Alaskans can use to increase fish populations through a Fisheries Enhancement Permit. This permit will allow Alaskan residents and organizations to increase natural fish populations, introduce fish to new bodies of water, and improve fish habitat for natural populations. HB 220 lets individuals and organizations to give back to Alaska and help ensure that future generations can enjoy the bounteous blessing of healthy natural fisheries.

HB 220 also contains effective controls in order to ensure that projects approved under this bill do not harm Alaskan fisheries. These include a prohibition of projects using invasive species or nonindigenous fish food sources, projects will only be allowed in areas that have low or nonexistent fish populations, and a requirement for applicants to reasonably communicate with local stakeholders including native tribes, governmental organizations, and other affected people.

House Bill 220 will benefit Alaskans by increasing natural fish populations, increasing scientific knowledge of our State's fisheries, and allowing residents and local organizations to invest their own time and money into sustaining our natural resources. HB 220 will be one more tool that we can use to ensure that all Alaskans, both today and in the future, can participate and benefit from Alaska's natural fish resources

10:33:32 AM

JOSHUA BANKS, Staff, Representative David Talerico, Alaska State Legislature, provided the sectional analysis to review the changes proposed in Version N, paraphrasing from the committee packet handout titled "Sectional Analysis - House Bill 220," which states [original punctuation provided]:

Sec. 1 - AS 16.05.855

Creates a new section in AS 16.05 to create a fisheries enhancement permit. AS 16.05.855 consists of the following subsections:

(a) Creates a new subsection for the activities that are allowed under the new fisheries enhancement permit:

- (1) Remove fish from water, incubate or fertilize eggs, and place eggs back in water
- (2) Enhance habitat and augment nutrients in state water
- (3) Create a hatchery subject to AS 16.10.375-16.10.480

(b) Creates a new subsection setting what type of information must be on the application to obtain a fisheries enhancement permit. This information includes:

- (1) The applicant's name
- (2) Reasoning and feasibility of the proposed project
- (3) Documentation of conditions justifying project and any collaboration with local stakeholders
- (4) Locations of water in which applicant will take fish and place fish eggs or fish
- (5) Species and number of fish taken from water
- (6) Applicant's management plan for propagation or repopulation in permitted water
- (7) Applicant's goals, schedule, scope of work, budget, means of data collection, plan for genetics management, and watershed enhancement plan, if applicable.
- (8) Application fee of \$100

MR. BANKS, in reviewing these initial changes, added that the intent is to include language which allows enhancement for trout and other species outside of the salmonid family. He also clarified that the CS removes language from the original bill to

alleviate any confusion regarding the current statutes governing hatchery permits.

[10:38:10 AM](#)

MR. BANKS continued paraphrasing:

(c) Creates a subsection requiring that the Department of Fish & Game (DF&G) determine, before issuing a permit, that the project:

(1) May restore or introduce a fish population in a body of water where subsistence and escapement goals have not been met, where there are no established escapement goals and local stakeholders have identified a decline in fish populations, or the species of fish is limited or absent due to a lack of access to the body of water

(2) Will result in public benefits

(3) Will not introduce a nonindigenous fish species to a body of water in violation of AS 16.35.210

(d) Creates a subsection regarding factors that the commissioner of DF&G shall consider when determining if a permit will be issued, including:

(1) The department's assessment of the project

(2) The capabilities of the applicant

(3) The degree of communication that exists between the applicant and individuals affected by the project

(4) Comments relating to the project

(5) If the project is consistent with the constitutional and statutory requirements imposed on the department

(6) If the project will increase scientific knowledge and understanding of the natural resources affected by the project

(e) Creates a new subsection requiring a permittee to collect and provide project data and reports requested by the department and to reasonably communicate with individuals affected by the project.

(f) Creates a new subsection to allow a permit that is issued to be transferred to another qualified person as defined by subsection (k).

(g) Creates a subsection which sets the timeline for when DF&G must act on a permit application. Within 15

days, the department must notify an applicant whether or not their application is complete and can reject an incomplete application if it is not complete within 30 days of the notification. After the notification, DF&G must approve or reject the application with 60 days, otherwise the application is automatically approved.

(h) Creates a new subsection setting requirements for public notice and comment for a permit application. DF&G will provide public notice of an application on the department's website and by e-mail to individuals who request notification within 15 days after the department receives the application. A person may submit public comment within 30 days after public notice is given. DF&G will also provide public notice of the approval or rejection of an application within 30 days after a determination is made.

[10:42:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT asked for clarification regarding the transferability of the permit. Permit actions are managed under the auspices of ADF&G, she noted, and asked whether appeals to adjudication, regarding permit rulings, are also handled within the department.

MR. BANKS responded that the bill does not include an appeal process. The permit is a basic, self-contained document designed for acceptance or rejection by authorities. If the applicant fails to provide complete information, it would constitute a cause for rejection; the applicant then has 30 days to comply.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT pointed out that any transfer would be to a third party who would not have filed original paperwork with the department. If denied, she conjectured, adjudication may be pursued.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO assured the committee that the intent is to have anyone receiving a permit, via transfer, be required to file the same paperwork for review by ADF&G, as the original permit holder.

[10:48:40 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES read from the analysis, page 2 (e), "...reasonably communicate..." to ask whether the bill defines the term.

MR. BANKS said yes, under subsection [(k)].

MR. BANKS continued to review the proposed timeline for application review. He said the sponsor is still working with the department on the timelines and is open to hearing arguments for adjusting the number of days proposed in subsections (g) and (h). He continued paraphrasing:

- (i) Creates a new subsection to enact requirements of a permittee to:
  - (1) Preserve natural fish feeding behavioral patterns
  - (2) If necessary, use supplemental nutrients derived from indigenous sources in the state

[10:52:29 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT expressed concern for introducing biological agents into waterways, citing a need for caution regarding invasive species, and asked how the process will be overseen.

MR. BANKS MR. BANKS said the intent is to have the process reviewed by ADF&G to determine the viability and appropriateness of any proposals. Also, the proposed CS places a 500,000 egg limit on projects to restrict the size of any undertaking; the intent being not to allow large scale operations of this nature.

[10:54:50 AM](#)

MR. BANKS said the term bucket biology has come to the fore, referring to the indiscriminate introduction of species by anyone with the financial means to obtain a permit. He pointed out the proposed language to limit such activity, as he continued paraphrasing the sectional analysis, subsection (i), paragraph [3]:

- (3) Implement controls to avoid the introduction of nonindigenous pathogens or to increase indigenous pathogens beyond acceptable levels

- (j) Creates a new subsection requiring that information provided under subsection (e) must be made available on the department's website for at least six months, unless it is confidential by law.

MR. BANKS explained that any scientific information garnered will be available for use by ADF&G, not private entities. Further, the enhanced fish resources are to benefit the public; targeting these runs for commercial harvest is disallowed.

[10:58:59 AM](#)

MR. BANKS continued paraphrasing:

(k) Creates definitions for the following terms under AS 16.05.855:

(1) "person" is defined as an individual, any business, governmental agency, or another legal or commercial entity

(2) "qualified person" is defined as a state resident, a corporation organized under Alaska law, or a corporation not organized under Alaska law that collaborates with a resident or Alaskan corporation

(3) "reasonably communicate" is defined as communicating significant information regarding the project by a mode of communication that is likely to notify persons that a reasonable person would know are affected by the project

MR. BANKS interjected that the definitions for "person," "qualified person," and "reasonably communicate," have been included to ensure local control and transparency, while taking into consideration the limitations of Alaska's rural settings.

[11:01:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON questioned "reasonably communicate," as a working definition, due to the subjectivity invoked.

CHAIR STUTES echoed similar concerns regarding the subjectivity of the language.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT underscored the need to elaborate and clarify the definition. She suggested soliciting assistance from the drafting attorney to gain an understanding of the proposed usage of the term.

[11:04:23 AM](#)

MR. BANKS finished the sectional analysis, paraphrasing Sec. 2, which read:

Sec. 2 - AS 16.05.871

Creates a new section that requires the commissioner of DF&G to consider a fisheries enhancement project when determining if a project will provide sufficient protections of fish and game resources from project related damages.

[11:05:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ directed attention to the expert letters included in the packet, outlining the techniques for moist air incubation. He asked about the level of usage for this type of technology and any reports available showing success/failure rates, or perhaps citing particular issues.

MR. BANKS deferred.

[11:07:18 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS mentioned the need to consider the importance of maintaining Alaska's commercial fisheries as certifiably sustainable. Outside groups have requirements to review and hold to strict guidelines for rating the Alaskan products as sustainable, when working in conjunction with enhancement/hatchery operations. He asked whether the sustainability status has been applied to the proposed legislation.

MR. BANKS deferred.

[11:09:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT expressed interest in enhancing fish populations. She turned to the fiscal note to ask about the mariculture positions being deleted from ADF&G. Predicting that the bill would create a good program, she asked about the zero fiscal note and what support the department might require in order to absorb the legislative action.

MR. BANKS deferred.

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[11:12:03 AM](#)

BRIAN ASHTON said hatchery efforts have had a positive effect on harvest numbers, and helped in stabilizing the salmon industries economy. However, wild runs require protection, and the concern for preservation of wild runs has prompted him to study methodologies that might be useful. He shared that, when the federal government identifies a species of concern, it becomes a listed fish. It's impossible not to harvest listed fish, in the pursuit of the non-listed species. One option, being used in the lower 48, is to intervene by incubating the eggs and feeding the smolt, prior to releasing them in the wild. He conjectured that this results in a form of domestication, which could be avoided through more conservative measures. Directing attention to the committee packet and the handout entitled, "Egg Survival Rate Comparison," he pointed out how, from 5,000 King salmon eggs, a survival rate of only 5 percent, or 250 fish, could be expected; whereas, with assistance, the rate could be increased to 95 percent, or 4,750 fish. Intervention might include: physical interception in the stream, manual fertilization, incubation, and same location release as early in the life cycle as possible. He cited several areas, including tributaries of the Stikine River, which no longer support wild runs do to hatchery encroachment and deforestation. The department has provided good management for fifty years; however, addressing the decline among discreet subpopulations of fish presents a problem. The public could be trained to handle the necessary steps, as outlined in the bill. The proposed legislation allows approval of an intermediary permit process for conservative enhancement of specific subpopulations of fish. Strict genetic controls would be adhered to, as developed by ADF&G, ensuring healthy run management and protection. Through these measures, if should the federal government should deem it necessary to list any fish in Alaska, the department would be able to present an existing plan, which the government would then monitor rather than needing to intervene. Residents are an important factor in ensuring healthy runs, and community involvement is necessary along with appropriate education of the local stakeholders.

[11:22:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked for a definition/description of wild salmon and how it differs from fish produced in the existing hatcheries.

MR. ASHTON opined that a wild fish must survive in the wild throughout its entire life cycle. He related the traditional method that was once used, by the Natives, when, concerned with escapement numbers, they collected and manually fertilized the

eggs. Buried in the gravel to hatch in protective cedar baskets, this practice effectively enhanced the fish populations. In keeping with his definition, he said a fish that has been assisted to survive can still be considered wild.

[11:26:14 AM](#)

WILL MAYO, Executive Director, Tribal Government and Client Services, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), stated support for HB 220, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I speak in favor of HB220.

Our member communities live first and foremost on a subsistence economy. Many people augment their livelihood with the cash economy, but living off the land is the true source of their food security.

Historically, 60% of the diet is derived from salmon, specifically King (Chinook) salmon. Chum salmon, though numerous, are not of equal quality, and Silver salmon have made up for some of the loss but the traditional methods of processing is difficult due to colder, wetter weather.

In recent years the Kings have declined alarmingly to the point that our member communities have even self-imposed a moratorium on harvesting Kings. This last season our fishermen worked cooperatively with ADFG in-season managers to take all necessary measures to increase escapement, agreeing to stringent management actions and limitations. The level of concern is extremely high. The commitment to recovery is total among our rural communities.

I spend many hours boating the Yukon River between my ancestral territory around Tanana, Rampart, and Stevens Village. I am a tribal member of Tanana and my father is from Rampart where my family has a camp. This last summer I traveled the river extensively with my family and witnessed the unbelievable. Fish camps sat empty for most of the season with no fish on the drying racks and smokehouses unused. There were few Kings to be had and camp activity was very minimal. It is a sad sight compared to my childhood memories of camp after camp full of activity with drying racks

full. A low level of camp activity occurred toward fall-time with the arrival of the Silvers.

Under the direction of our tribes, TCC has been an active participant with the fisheries management systems. Our activities cover a wide spectrum of efforts, including regulatory processes, close interaction with state and federal managers, the creation of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC), participation in the Yukon River Panel, the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, training and advocacy, and scientific data collection projects with our biologists and local fishermen.

One area that we want to develop capacity in is in recovery and enhancement programs.

Everyone knows the great success of the Gulkana Hatchery program. This program successfully provides a personal use fishery in the Copper River drainage that contributes to food security for a broad swath of Alaskans all along the Alaska Highway system, including Anchorage and Fairbanks. The Chitna dipnet fishery is one opportunity many Alaskans participate in annually.

We believe that there are also opportunities for the enhancement and recovery of Yukon River stocks that can be utilized along with the escapement model to address specific sub-species.

There is an advance in recovery technology that show promise for recovery efforts and with a track record in Alaska, Washington and California. It holds great potential promise for our interior discreet sub-species fisheries. This technology could benefit our remote communities similarly to what the Gulkana program has done for the urban populations. We wish to add this tool to our efforts, building skills and capacity for a well-balanced approach to fishery management. We want to do so with full cooperation and oversight by the ADFG through an expanded permitting system spelled out in this proposed measure.

This bill provides structure to the states' permitting system that is fair to everyone, allowing proposals to

move forward while providing assurance that sound scientific processes are preserved.

We are not talking about hatcheries because we don't want that. We are only interested in the recovery of wild stocks through with as minimal intervention as possible, to preserve the wild nature of our resource. Over the years, we have seen different discreet sub-species drop in returns to the point of cutting off important fisheries such as the crash of the Fall Chum runs in the 90's and now the Kings. We want to be effective partners in recovery efforts, working hand in hand with state managers to develop tools that work.

In these times of financial challenge, it makes good sense to work together utilizing affordable technology breakthroughs that can be scientifically applied under stringent controls and sound biology to aid in recovery efforts.

HB220 is a big step in the direction of sound scientific practices, applied to discreet sub-species recovery efforts. Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

[11:41:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT agreed with the sentiments expressed by the witness and with the importance for the legislation. She asked if TCC shares any concern for how the stock will be fed, during the rearing process. The fewer human hands touch a stock, the better, she opined, and stressed the importance of preserving the wild status of the return.

MR. MAYO said feeding would not occur, as the effort is for the smolt to emerge into a natural habitat. Any process undertaken would be noninvasive and the fry would make their way to the sea, with minimal intervention. Ancient Tlingit methodologies would be considered and adopted for modern implementation.

[11:45:58 AM](#)

SARAH O'NEAL, Biologist, University of Washington, stated opposition to HB 220 and reported having worked extensively in the Pacific Northwest, while pursuing a doctorate degree. She said that maintaining the high standards of commercial fishing

management, already in place, and not creating additional hatcheries, would be the best means for success. The history of hatcheries in the lower 48 states, has shown that the enhancement expected eventually becomes a liability and a detriment to the wild stocks. The hatcheries are primarily an unsuccessful attempt to satisfy existing treaty obligations. She reported that hatcheries systematically fail and impact natural runs negatively, for numerous reasons including: increase of introduced disease, competition for food in fresh and salt water, increase in predatory animals, over harvest of wild stocks with the hatchery catch, and gene pool dilution of wild and hatchery stock. The interbreeding result is a school of fish that are not as hardy and do not possess the same instinctive return and survival skills. Increasing hatchery production is not helpful, she stressed.

[11:50:24 AM](#)

LINDSEY BLOOM stated concern for the proposed legislation and concurred with the concerns of the previous witness. Additionally, she said, what occurs in the tributary stream, to assist the smolt, may not support the ocean phase of the salmon. Also, parameters for the maximum number of small enhancement projects in a given watershed system is not included in the bill. Finally, the application process may become unmanageable, she said, and offered to provide other concerns in writing.

[11:53:46 AM](#)

ALEXUS KWACHKA stated absolute opposition to HB 220, without elaboration.

[11:54:18 AM](#)

CHRIS BERNS suggested that areas could form regional aquaculture associations (RAAs) to address the situation. The bill is not well fleshed out, he opined, such as enhancement details. He conjectured whether enhancement might mean removal of beaver dams, or other such actions. Neither is funding addressed, he pointed out. Regional aquaculture associations have access to funds for start-up projects, and individuals should not be issued permits, only associations, he opined. The bill appears to be trying to reinvent the wheel.

[11:57:52 AM](#)

JOEL RANDRUP, Commercial Fisherman, stated opposition to HB 220, and opined that fish management should remain within the purview of ADF&G. The bill presents additional burdens to the department, at a time of budget cuts. If there is a problem that needs to be addressed, appropriate resources should be allocated to the department, he said.

[11:59:47 AM](#)

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Owner, Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries, commented that the bill appears to be well intentioned, but cautioned on opening the door to this type of enhancement. She opined that the action could result in fish wars beyond comprehension. Although it can seem good to add fish to a system, she said it can also be devastating to the existing populations. Further, she suggested that maintaining self-sustaining habitats would be a better focus. The factory pink and chum salmon hatcheries, already operating, may be a contributing factor to the low numbers in the various wild stocks. The American Fisheries Society, during its 2015 symposium, spoke on the topic "Hatchery Versus Wild Salmonids," and in the opening statement indicated that one of the most controversial and hot topics in fisheries biology today is the interaction between hatchery and wild salmon. She paraphrased from a statement, which read:

To address and better understand these interactions, fisheries managers and researchers are re-evaluating how hatchery programs are managed; if these programs may be contributing to the decline of wild populations. Further, as the relationship becomes better understood, there is a growing need to inform policy makers, resource managers, recreational, tribal, and commercial fishing communities and the general public, on the importance of wild populations. They prescribe understanding the limitation of hatchery origin fish and stocking programs. They emphasize that maintaining healthy habitat is critical, not only to maintaining viable self-sustaining natural populations, but also to adequately controlling [sic] the risks of hatchery programs.

MS. HILLSTRAND stressed the need to review literature compiled, during the last 10 years, regarding this topic, adding that a bill, such as HB 220, would serve to open another door that may further damage wild stocks. Finally, the funding for monitoring this type of program could result in huge costs, and she

suggested reviewing the fiscal requirements. She stated that she is against this bill.

CHAIR STUTES closed public testimony after ascertaining no one further wished to testify.

[HB 220 was held over.]

CHAIR STUTES thanked the participants and announced the next meeting.

[12:03:49 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.