

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

March 24, 2016

10:08 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bob Herron
Representative Craig Johnson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS(S):

Fishermen's Fund Advisory Panel

Renee Weddle Alward - Homer

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)

Israel Payton - Wasilla
Robert Ruffner - Soldotna

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 300

"An Act relating to management of enhanced stocks of fish; authorizing the operation of nonprofit shellfish hatcheries; relating to application fees for salmon and shellfish hatchery permits; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 300(FSH) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 300

SHORT TITLE: FISH/SHELLFISH HATCHERY/ENHANCE. PROJECTS
SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/05/16 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/05/16 (H) FSH, FIN
03/24/16 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

RENEE ALWARD, Appointee
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory Panel.

ISREAL PAYTON, Appointee
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

RICHARD MCGAHAN SR., Fisherman
Nikiski, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to the appointment of Israel Payton to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

FRED STURMAN, Fisherman
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to the appointment of Israel Payton to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the confirmation hearings of appointees to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

PAUL SHADURA, II, Spokesperson
South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI)
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Alan Cain, Israel Payton and Robert Ruffner as appointees to the Alaska State Board of Fisheries (BOF).

BIRCH YUKNIS, Member
Matanuska-Susitna Fisheries Advisory Committee
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Israel Payton to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

ROBERT RUFFNER, Appointee
Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

RICHARD MCGAHAN
Nikiski, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Robert Ruffner to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

FRED STURMAN
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Robert Ruffner to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 300 on behalf of the governor.

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

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the hearing on HB 300.

HEATHER MCCARTY, Spokesperson
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 300.

JULIE DECKER, Executive Director
Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation
Wrangell, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 300.

NANCY HILLSTRAND
Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries
Kachemak Bay, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 300.

GINNY ECKERT, PhD, Professor
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 300.

CHRIS MIERZEJEK, Director of Administration
Community Development Quota (CDQ)
Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
(APICDA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 300.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:08:16 AM](#)

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Representatives Stutes, Foster, Millett, and Ortiz were present at the call to order. Representative Kreiss-Tomkins arrived as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING (S):

Fishermen's Fund Advisory Panel

Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)

[10:08:43 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be confirmations to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory Panel and the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

CHAIR STUTES reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[10:09:24 AM](#)

RENEE ALWARD, Appointee, provided a brief biography and work history which included participation in many areas of the fishing industry, as well as employment as support staff in the medical field. She cited her interests in serving on the board,

stating commitment to the health and longevity of Alaska's sustainable fisheries. The passion she holds for the industry, as well as her understanding of medical terminology and processes, will be a good base for providing support to the advisory panel, she opined.

[10:12:27 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened and, seeing no response, closed public testimony.

[10:12:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to advance the confirmation of Renee Alward, appointee to the Fishermen's Fund Advisory Panel, to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

[10:12:55 AM](#)

ISREAL PAYTON, Appointee, introduced himself as a lifelong Alaskan, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I was birthed by my father and mother in a 12X12 log trapper's cabin at the base of the Alaska Range, on the Hayes River. Being 75 air miles from the nearest hospital my parents weighted me with a Zebco fishing scale. I grew up in the bush, learning early on a deep respect for fish and wildlife resources since we subsisted off of them. This upbringing has instilled me with the values I live my life by today.

Like many Alaskans I have had various jobs to make a living; airplane mechanic, boat builder, welder, fishing and hunting guide, slope worker, wilderness professional, house builder, and landlord. Currently I work at Airframes Alaska, the largest aviation company in the state.

I have fished, hunted and worked in many different parts of the state, and have a diverse knowledge of Alaska Game and Fish as a whole. I am a member of the Mat-Su Fish and Game Advisory Committee and actively participate in the Board of Games and Fish meetings. I am constantly trying to recruit other young Alaskans in these processes as they are truly unique. In no

other state can a single individual have so much impact on passing a fish and game regulation.

MR. PAYTON pointed out that he currently works for an aviation company, which provides him an easy, economical means for traveling around the state.

[10:15:27 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[10:15:54 AM](#)

RICHARD MCGAHAN SR., Fisherman, stated opposition to the appointment of Israel Payton to the BOF, and opined that the board seat should have a biologist appointed versus a sport fishing guide. Besides a biologist, he said the board would benefit from seating an old commercial fisherman from Cook Inlet who knows the system and knows what needs to be done.

[10:16:55 AM](#)

FRED STURMAN, Fisherman, stated opposition to the appointment of Israel Payton to the BOF, stating that the board needs to have a biologist seated.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT queried whether the opposition being voiced is due to a disparity in regional seating or interest in having a biologist appointed.

MR. MCGAHAN restated his opposition, citing a need to have a regional, Cook Inlet, commercial fisherman appointed; one who knows the area and the industry. He said Mr. Payton has been a Kenai River sport fishing guide, not a commercial fisherman. However, a biologist is needed to run the Cook Inlet fishery appropriately and in accordance with state law, he opined.

[10:18:46 AM](#)

MR. STURMAN said the BOF has not seated anyone from Cook Inlet for many years, and it's time for that to change. A Cook Inlet biologist, with an understanding of the areas problems, would be best, he opined, and said he is not familiar with the candidate on a personal basis.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT surmised that the request is for seating a biologist or a commercial fisherman from Cook Inlet, but definitely not a sport fisherman.

MR. STURMAN underscored that a biologist with a full understanding of the Cook Inlet fishery is who should be seated. A biologist would be able to ensure that the commercial and sport harvests can be optimized. He said last year the commercial fishery experienced an inopportune closure which resulted in a million harvestable fish escaping unnecessarily up river.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT asked whether the Cook Inlet closure mentioned was a decision made by the department or the board.

[10:20:54 AM](#)

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), said the BOF describes and writes the management plans, which the department attempts to follow as closely as possible.

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT noted that the closure was facilitated by ADF&G in accordance with the management plan set forth by the BOF.

[10:21:40 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES referred to statute, and paraphrased from AS 16.05.221 which read as follows:

Sec. 16.05.221. Boards of fisheries and game.

(a) ... The governor shall appoint each member on the basis of interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, and ability in the field of action of the board, and with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view in the membership. ...

CHAIR STUTES established that the appointments are not made with regard to regional seats.

[10:22:22 AM](#)

PAUL SHADURA, II, Spokesperson, South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI), stated support for Alan Cain, Israel Payton and Robert Ruffner appointees to the BOF,

paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The South K-Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI) is a community group consisting of those individual commercial setnet fishermen who seek to harvest salmon primarily migrating to the Kasilof River in Cook Inlet.

The selection and confirmation of Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) members is of vital concern to our interests. The BOF directs managers to conserve; which has been defined in the courts as "the controlled utilization of a resource to prevent its exploitation, destruction or neglect." Equally as important is the other directive which is to develop: "connotes management of a resource to make it available for use". Both to be considered in a 'balance'.

In AS 16.05.221 Boards of fisheries and game, the Governor and the Legislature have direction in that each member shall be selected on ... "the basis of interest in public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, and ability in the field of action of the board, and with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view in membership."

In the Governor's press release on 02.02.2016, he states, "the board will ensure the resource is managed for the maximum benefit of Alaskans." While we support the concept of managing for Maximum Sustained Yield (MSY) we would add that by establishing this as the 'mission' of the BOF that this cannot happen without the full support of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G).

Commercial fishing is a base line economy of Alaska and by and large offers an economy to 71% of Alaska that they normally they would not have access to if they lived within our largest community. Salmon fishermen in Alaska are overwhelming made up of residents. The benefits of the salmon industry does not stop with the 730 thousand residents of our State. We supply a healthy sustainable protein source for all those Americans who are not so lucky to live on our Alaska land.

We are pleased with the Governors attempt to balance the talent of ideas, values, and expertise. Having said this we are concerned that by losing the knowledge and history of having a Bristol Bay commercial fishing experienced person on the Board will damage their collective abilities to make vital decisions based on the 'best available information'.

However, we do not hold our support for any of these appointees. Rather we support moving forward with possibly new ways to re-construct the board process, to better align it with the complex issues that were not possible to address 60 yrs. ago by our State's constitutional conveners. It is our belief that it is time that we take a serious look on ways to improve the process, to take the contentiousness away from the individual board member appointments, to give them the "tools" and the assistance to make clear, open, transparent and well informed decisions.

With that, the collective voice of SOKI fully support the appointment to the AKBOF of; Alan Cain, Israel Payton and Robert Ruffner.

10:26:04 AM

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT asked if the interest is to have a Bristol Bay fisherman seated.

MR. SHADURA clarified that the opposition is not due to interest in having a regional appointment, as statute does not make that provision; however, commercial fishing expertise is needed. Alaska's fisheries are the number one employer in the state and are being looked to as a means for relief at this challenging fiscal time. The issues are complex and it is imperative for the BOF to have the benefit of commercial fishermen who understand every region, he opined, to guide the board through this difficult time in Alaska.

10:27:17 AM

BIRCH YUKNIS, Member, Matanuska-Susitna Fisheries Advisory Committee, stated support for the appointment of Israel Peyton to the BOF, stating that he has proven helpful, does his homework, and has an ear for both sides of an issue. All of

Alaska will benefit despite differences that are bound to arise, he opined.

[10:28:08 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES closed public testimony.

[10:28:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to advance the confirmation of Israel Payton, appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

[10:28:41 AM](#)

ROBERT RUFFNER, Appointee, Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), provided a description of his talents that he will bring to the BOF, which include a degree in geology and river mechanics. During the past 20 years, he has applied these skills and honed his ability to utilize numerical modeling and apply data and statistics for planning and development purposes. It is a valuable skill set for a BOF member to possess, he opined. In terms of interest in public affairs, service on other boards is also in his background. He pledged to adhere to the established allocation criteria and couple the governing statute with the administrative code for sustainable salmon policy, in the decision making process.

[10:31:17 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[10:31:49 AM](#)

RICHARD MCGAHAN, stated support for the appointment of Robert Ruffner to the BOF, and said the candidate possesses a good interest in the river systems and escapement goals. It's important to have someone on the board who will protect fishing resources, and he predicted that Mr. Ruffner will have that as a priority.

[10:32:39 AM](#)

FRED STURMAN, Soldotna, Alaska, stated support for the appointment of Robert Ruffner to the BOF, and opined that he will do a good job.

[10:33:01 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES closed public testimony.

[10:33:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to advance the confirmation of Robert Ruffner, appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

HB 300-FISH/SHELLFISH HATCHERY/ENHANCE. PROJECTS

[10:33:35 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 300, "An Act relating to management of enhanced stocks of fish; authorizing the operation of nonprofit shellfish hatcheries; relating to application fees for salmon and shellfish hatchery permits; and providing for an effective date."

[10:34:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 300, Version 29-GH2653\W, Bullard, 3/21/16, as the working document.

CHAIR STUTES objected for discussion.

[10:35:30 AM](#)

SAM COTTEN, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), introduced HB 300, and said it allows the department to issue permits for shellfish enhancement and for rehabilitation projects, as well as for the construction and operation of shellfish hatcheries by non-profit corporations for the same purpose. The goal to help improve the state's economy and provide a method to increase the available harvest of shellfish. For further details addressing the recommended changes to the original bill, he deferred comment.

[10:37:20 AM](#)

FOREST BOWERS, Deputy Director, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), said HB 300

caused a number of questions due to a need to standardize the text of the bill and reflect a unified syntax. The general public experienced confusion due to the inclusion of terminology which the department considered routine. Additionally, strong public interest was evident regarding shellfish enhancement and the rehabilitation of shellfish fisheries. After incorporating the public feedback, the bill required a title change. Also, a paragraph was added to prohibit permit holders from procuring or placing genetically modified shellfish into state waters. Specifications for brood stock sourcing was included and a series of definitions were added. Finally, an immunity of liability clause was inserted, and a provision for donation of shellfish to a food bank was removed.

[10:40:13 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES removed her objection, and without further objection, Version W was before the committee.

[10:40:19 AM](#)

MR. BOWERS referred to the committee packet, to paraphrase from the document titled, "Sectional Analysis, HB 300, Version W, Shellfish Stock Rehabilitation and Fishery Enhancement Projects, March 23, 2016," which read as follows:

Sec. 1

Provides the Alaska Board of Fisheries authority to direct the department to manage production of enhanced shellfish stocks, beyond brood stock needs, for cost recovery harvest.

Sec. 2

Increases the permit application fee for new private nonprofit salmon hatcheries from \$100 to \$1,000.

Sec. 3

Adds a new Chapter 12 to Title 16, "Shellfish Stock Rehabilitation Efforts, Enhancement Projects, and Hatcheries.

Provides direction to the commissioner on issuance of permits for private nonprofit shellfish stock rehabilitation and fishery enhancement projects and associated shellfish hatcheries and establishes a \$1,000 permit application fee. This section directs the commissioner to consult with technical experts in

the relevant areas before permit issuance. This section provides for a hearing prior to issuance of a permit and describes certain permit terms including cost recovery fisheries, harvest, sale, and release of hatchery-produced shellfish, and selection of brood stock sources. This section describes reporting requirements and terms for modification or revocation of a permit.

Sec. 4

Provides the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission authority to issue special harvest area entry permits to holders of private nonprofit shellfish rehabilitation, enhancement or hatchery permits.

Sec. 5

Defines legal fishing gear for special harvest area entry permit holders.

Sec. 6

Exempts shellfish raised in a private nonprofit shellfish project from the farmed fish definition.

Sec. 7 and 8

Establish tax exemption for a nonprofit corporation holding a shellfish hatchery, rehabilitation, or enhancement permit.

Sec. 9

Exempts shellfish harvested under a special harvest area entry permit from certain taxes.

Sec. 10

Establishes an effective date of the fee for salmon hatchery permits described in sec. 2.

Sectional Analysis, HB 300 - 2 - April 4, 2016

Sec. 11

Authorizes the department to adopt implementing regulations.

Sec. 12

Establishes an immediate effective date for sec. 12 pursuant to AS 01.10.070(c).

Sec. 13

Establishes an effective date for sec. 9 concomitant with sec. 2 effective date.

[10:43:41 AM](#)

MR. BOWERS added that the bill was structured after the existing statutes governing salmon, private, non-profit, programs to utilize applicable elements.

[10:44:10 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[10:44:33 AM](#)

HEATHER MCCARTY, Spokesperson, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, stated support for HB 300, and said the crab fishery has not undergone a stock resurgence, and enhancement appears to be the best means to bring the industry back. The technology exists, and many committee and public members support an enhancement approach.

[10:49:17 AM](#)

JULIE DECKER, Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, stated support for HB 300, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) would like to express support for HB 300. AFDF recognizes that HB 300 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.

AFDF's membership is comprised of seafood harvesters, seafood processors, and support sector businesses. Since 1978, AFDF's mission has been to identify problems and opportunities that are common across Alaska's seafood industry and to help develop solutions utilizing applied research and development which balance economic benefits with sustainability principles.

One of AFDF's recent projects is to spearhead the Alaska Mariculture Initiative, which is meant to expedite the development of mariculture in Alaska with the vision to grow a \$1 billion industry in 30 years.

Governor Walker's recent Administrative Order #280 establishes the Alaska Mariculture Task Force and is also part of this larger effort to develop mariculture. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide recommendations for a comprehensive plan to develop a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities.

HB 300 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska. HB 300 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and hatcheries, in a similar fashion as the current management of salmon fishery enhancement and hatcheries. This would allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, or razor clams.

I would like to briefly address concerns of negative impacts to wild shellfish from hatchery shellfish. As a Client for the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) sustainability certification program, AFDF has a unique position and viewpoint on this issue. On one hand, AFDF hears concerns from industry that ADF&G's fishery enhancement policies are too restrictive, increase cost, and slow progress. On the other hand, AFDF is also in the position of facilitating a review of ADF&G's fishery enhancement policies by independent third party experts to determine whether they follow internationally accepted standards for sustainably managed fisheries. Alaska salmon maintains RFM certification, because of ADF&G's policies which are designed around a precautionary approach that prioritizes wild fish and minimizes adverse impacts to wild stocks. Following is a list of some of ADF&G's enhancement policies: genetics, disease, pathology, siting of hatcheries, fish culturing techniques, release strategies, harvest, habitat, marking, transportation, planning, and reporting. Given these extensive policies, AFDF and independent third parties have confidence that ADF&G is fulfilling its constitutional mandate to manage our fishery resources for sustainability.

Finally, I understand that a committee substitute (CS) will be introduced at Thursday's meeting that mirrors the latest version of the companion bill (SB 172) which was passed out of Senate Resources Committee. This is our preferred version with changes that improve the clarity and intent of the bill. AFDF supports this CS of HB 300 and appreciates the Administration's proactive role in introducing the legislation.

[10:53:13 AM](#)

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries, stated opposition to HB 300, and said the governance of shellfish needs to be independent of the statutes that were written for salmon. Legislation needs to address shellfish specifically. She pointed out that a species of king crab was released into the Bering Sea and is now considered invasive.

[10:57:07 AM](#)

GINNY ECKERT, PhD, Professor, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), stated support for HB 300, and paraphrased from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The Steering Committee of the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRAB) program would like to express appreciation and support for House Bill 300, version W.

The AKCRRAB program is a coalition of university, federal and stakeholder groups, formed in 2006 with the goals of adding to the scientific understanding of crab life history and ecology, as well as the eventual rehabilitation of depressed king crab stocks in Alaska. AKCRRAB is developing scientifically sound strategies for hatching, rearing and out planting king crab in Alaska, in order to help restore populations to self-sustainable levels.

In phase one, from 2006 to 2011, AKCRRAB researchers made significant accomplishments in developing and improving methods of hatchery rearing of larval and juvenile king crab from wild-caught brood stock, to the point where large-scale production is feasible. Parallel field and laboratory studies of crab ecology

and population genetics were also conducted during this time.

In the second and current phase, hatchery studies have been complemented by studies essential to understanding optimal release strategies, appropriate habitat, and potential impact on existing ecosystems. This research is providing the science necessary for informing the responsible release of hatchery-reared animals. Increased knowledge will allow scientists and managers to assess the feasibility of ecologically sound rehabilitation of depressed stocks, with potentially substantial benefits to Alaska.

In the third and final phase, AKCRRAB intends to evolve from the current, research-oriented coalition, to a formal entity focused on transitioning hatchery techniques and out planting technologies to communities and industry as part of statewide efforts to help rehabilitate depleted king crab stocks. As phase three develops, the program will require support and guidance from the State of Alaska, as the transition from feasibility to implementation will need to be guided with a new regulatory structure.

House Bill 300, as aligned with the recent Senate Resources Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 172, is a response to the need for new regulations for shellfish culture. The AKCRRAB Steering Committee is pleased that the Administration and the Legislature are addressing this need. In a preliminary review of the proposed legislation, the original version of Senate Bill 172, we identified several areas of concern for AKCRRAB program participants. We were pleased that our concerns, and those of others, were addressed in the Committee Substitute.

We intend to participate fully in further discussions and hearings on this important legislation. The AKCRRAB Steering Committee stands ready to interact with Committee members and staff as needed. Please let us know how we can be of help.

[10:59:49 AM](#)

CHRIS MIERZEJEK, Director of Administration, Community Development Quota (CDQ), stated support for HB 300 and opined

that it could generate economic opportunities throughout the western coastal areas of Alaska.

CHAIR STUTES closed public testimony.

[11:01:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ asked about sea otter management and whether reducing populations would have a positive impact.

[11:02:51 AM](#)

MR. BOWERS responded that sea otters are limiting shell fish production in some areas of the state. However, the areas impacted by the sea otter may be good rehabilitation locations, especially if the otters have moved to other areas. Certainly abalone would be a good species for rehabilitation, he opined.

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ said when speaking about restoration versus rehabilitation, what are the differences.

MR. BOWERS explained scenarios for both approaches: Stock rehabilitation and fisheries enhancement are what the department practices, and restoration is not the agencies purview. Rehabilitation is when a native species have been extirpated, or nearly so, and the effort is to rebuild a species to natural production levels. Enhancement relates to boosting production of fisheries above natural levels for additional yield, in the common property fishery. The majority of the projects in the area of salmon are for enhancement purposes, he finished.

[11:06:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER moved to report the proposed CS for HB 300, Version 29-GH2653\W, Bullard, 3/21/16, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 300(FSH) was reported from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

CHAIR STUTES congratulated the appointees and thanked the day's participants.

[11:06:38 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.