

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

April 23, 2019

10:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Mark Neuman

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Chuck Kopp

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 116

"An Act relating to the renewal or extension of site leases for aquatic farming and aquatic plant and shellfish hatchery operations."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 8

Recognizing 2019 as the International Year of the Salmon and supporting an associated global initiative identifying the importance of wild salmon.

- MOVED HR 8 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 116

SHORT TITLE: AQUATIC FARM/HATCHERY SITE LEASES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STORY

03/27/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/19	(H)	FSH, RES
04/12/19	(H)	SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE INTRODUCED
04/12/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/12/19	(H)	FSH, RES
04/16/19	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

04/16/19 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/23/19 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HR 8

SHORT TITLE: 2019: INT'L YEAR OF THE SALMON

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TARR

04/10/19 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/10/19 (H) FSH, RES
04/16/19 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
04/16/19 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/23/19 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE ANDI STORY

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SSHB 116 as sponsor of the bill.

GREG SMITH, Staff

Representative Andi Story

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Story, sponsor, provided information and answered questions on SSHB 116.

JULIE DECKER, Chair

Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation

Wrangell, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SSHB 116 and provided invited testimony in support of SSHB 116.

META MESDAG, Owner

Salty Lady Seafood Company

Board Member, Alaska Shellfish Growers Association

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of SSHB 116.

MARGO REVEIL, President

Alaska Shellfish Growers Association

Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SSHB 116.

TAMSEN PEEPLES, Alaska Mariculture Manager

Blue Evolution
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SSHB 116.

NANCY HILLSTRAND
Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified regarding SSHB 116 and urged that a definition of "small" aquatic farm be included.

CHRISTIANNA COLLES, Leasing Unit Manager
Southcentral Regional Land Office
Division of Mining, Land and Water
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SSHB 116.

MARKOS SCHEER, CEO
Premium Aquatics, LLC
Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SSHB 116.

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff
Representative Geran Tarr
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HR 8 on behalf of Representative Tarr, sponsor.

TYSON FICK
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of HR 8.

ERIN HARRINGTON, Executive Director
The Salmon Project
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of HR 8.

JILL WEITZ, Campaign Director
Salmon Beyond Borders Campaign
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of HR 8.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBRA LEKANOFF
House District 40, Washington State Legislature
Olympia, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 8.

REPRESENTATIVE KEN HELM

House District 34, Oregon State Legislature
Salem, Oregon

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 8.

MARK SAUNDERS, IYS Director - North Pacific Region
International Year of the Salmon
North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission
Vancouver, British Columbia

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 8.

DOUG MECUM, Deputy Regional Administrator
Alaska Region
National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 8.

CHRIS SERGEANT, Research Scientist
Flathead Lake Bio Station
University of Montana
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 8.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:03:24 AM](#)

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Vance, Tarr, Kreiss-Tomkins, and Stutes. Representatives Edgmon and Neuman arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 116-AQUATIC FARM/HATCHERY SITE LEASES

[10:04:10 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 116, "An Act relating to the renewal or extension of site leases for aquatic farming and aquatic plant and shellfish hatchery operations."

[10:04:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ANDI STORY, Alaska State Legislature, introduced SSHB 116 as the sponsor. She said SSHB 116 would simplify the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) renewal process for aquatic farms that grow such things as oysters, kelp, and other shellfish. If enacted, the bill would help small Alaska based aquaculture businesses succeed by reducing administrative burdens and expediting the lease renewal process. Aquaculture is an industry with a lot of promise and Alaska with more coastline than all the other states combined has bountiful potential as a site for aquatic farms of oysters, kelp, and other shellfish. The Alaska Mariculture Task Force set a goal of making this a \$100 million industry in the next 20 years.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY drew attention to the flow chart in the committee packet and noted that the requirements to permit and receive regulatory approval to operate an aquatic farm or related hatchery are complex. She said the most rigorous and time-consuming portion of the approval process is the DNR aquatic farming site lease for both the original lease and the lease renewal. Because of the recent increase in the number of aquaculture farm lease applications - one for a new aquatic farm in 2016, 17 in 2017, and 16 in 2018 - coupled with recent cuts to agency staff, it now takes on average 18 months or more to approve an aquatic farm lease. Simplifying the renewal process for aquatic farm leases would reduce the burden on division staff, allowing them more time to focus on new lease applications.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out that an aquatic farm lease renewal must undergo the same lengthy approval process similar to an original lease. This is not required of numerous other DNR lease types, and SSHB 116 would align the lease renewal process for aquatic farms to the lease renewal process for other DNR leases. This change would significantly shorten the first renewal process while still allowing appropriate regulatory oversight, public engagement, and appeal of any DNR lease decision. She emphasized that the bill does not affect leases for salmon hatcheries.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY stated that as a new legislator she is pleased with how SSHB 116 began and how it was developed. Shortly after taking office she was contacted by a constituent who was in the process of transferring an aquatic farm lease, a process that would not be affected by SSHB 116. The constituent shared the experience of the lease transfer process and suggested a few possible changes that might help applicants.

After subsequent conversations with DNR, DNR staff mentioned the streamlining of the aquatic farm renewal process to reduce regulatory burden on applicants while also reducing workload on an understaffed state agency. She said her staff person, Mr. Greg Smith, is available to explain the four proposed changes to the statute included in the bill.

10:08:20 AM

CHAIR STUTES requested the sponsor to explain the changes between the root version of the bill and the sponsor substitute.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY replied that the only change is in the title. She explained that after talking with people about the bill, she wanted to make it very clear what the bill affected and that it did not affect salmon hatcheries.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE observed that time for public comment and testimony is provided for an initial lease. She asked whether public comment would still be taken under the renewal process proposed by SSHB 116.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY responded yes and deferred to Mr. Smith to elaborate.

10:09:21 AM

GREG SMITH, Staff, Representative Andi Story, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Story, sponsor, explained there would still be public notice and public appeal during the renewal process. He said someone who is personally affected would be able to reach out to the director and the commissioner to request a review or an appeal of the decision.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS requested a review of the bill's mechanics.

MR. SMITH explained Section 1 of SSHB 116, Version 31-LS0696\U, would add AS [38.05.083], the section of law specific to aquaculture farm and related hatchery leases, to AS [38.05.070(e)], which is the subsection empowering the director to renew a lease under this section. Section 2 would remove the words "or renew" from two places so that those sections would then focus on the requirements of only a new lease application. Section 3 would do the same thing of removing the renewal process from AS 38.05.083(b). Section 4 would [add a new subsection] that explicitly states the commissioner may, under

AS 38.05.070(e)-(g), extend or renew a lease under AS 38.05.083, which is the aquaculture farm and related hatcheries section.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS referenced a letter in support of the bill from the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF), dated 4/15/19. He observed that page 2, paragraph 2, of the letter states the bill would allow for one renewal of an aquatic farm site through a simpler internal process that does not require public comment [if the lease is in good standing/compliance]. He inquired whether that is basically what this bill does.

MR. SMITH responded yes, it aligns the renewal process for an aquatic farm or related hatchery lease to a process that DNR follows for many other types of leases that the department does, such as hydroelectric facilities, fish processing docks, power lines, telecommunication sites, grazing, cabins, hunting and fishing lodges, and other uses.

[10:13:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS further observed that page 2, paragraph 2, of AFDF's letter of support goes on to state, "However, the second renewal would still be required to go through the extended process similar to a new application." He asked whether there is a section of law that would provide for that more exhaustive process with the second renewal that is not excerpted in SSHB 116.

MR. SMITH answered that the language not being changed in AS 38.05.070(e) can be seen on page 1, lines 8-9, of the bill, which state that the lease may be renewed only once [for a term not longer than the initial term of the lease]. For the second attempt at a renewal the applicant would have to again go through the original lease application process. So, if the bill were to pass, the original lease for an aquatic farm would have a more exhaustive process, less so on the renewal, and then after a period of 20 years total there would again be a very exhaustive process for the third period.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS said this information is helpful and he will read that section of law to become more familiar. He commented that he has heard from across Southeast Alaska that it is a royal headache getting these leases and trying to get a site up and running even when a person has the capital and energy to do it. He stated he is glad to see the bill coming

forward and inquired whether there are other things that should be done to make this easier.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY replied there have been other suggestions, but it was thought that this was a good place to start.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS suggested to the committee that there might be a receptive audience to doing even more if there are other "cut and dry changes" that could be added. He said he has his differences with this governor, but he thinks there is probably alignment in streamlining things as much as possible.

[10:16:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE said it seems like this is a regulatory issue that the department could do internally to reduce the regulation. But, she continued, it seems the bill would clear up a statutory obligation that would clean up the process a little to allow [aquaculture farm owners] to get that renewal quicker and easier.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY responded yes and related that through conversation DNR suggested that simplifying the renewal process would be one thing that could be done for those exact reasons.

[10:17:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES asked what the length of time is between the inception of starting a shellfish farm and producing and generating revenue from that farm.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY answered that the process has been taking 18 months, but there are people online who have been living and breathing this and could answer the question. She deferred to Mr. Smith to answer further.

MR. SMITH suggested it might be better to have DNR clarify.

CHAIR STUTES specified she is talking about the length of time between deciding to have an aquatic or shellfish farm and the time where that product is taken to market. She invited Ms. Julie Decker to respond.

[10:18:43 AM](#)

JULIE DECKER, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force; Executive Director, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation, replied that

as far as revenue production once a lease is issued it can take one year for seaweed, an annual crop; seven to eight years for a species like geoducks, a longer lived animal; and three to four years for oysters. That time span, she pointed out, is before the initial \$1 is generated. There is much investment and it will take even longer before the farm operator is in the black.

CHAIR STUTES opened invited testimony.

[10:19:40 AM](#)

META MESDAG, Owner, Salty Lady Seafood Company; Board Member, Alaska Shellfish Growers Association, on behalf of herself and the association, provided invited testimony in support of SSHB 116. She said she has a farm site in Juneau with a lease for oysters, kelp, and geoduck, and for which she submitted a lease transfer last year. She currently has oysters and is getting ready to seed geoduck. The oysters will take about three years to grow before they are ready for the market and the geoduck will take seven. Unfortunately, she only has five years left on her lease so will not see any revenue from her geoduck sales before she must go through the renewal process all over again. The intention with her very small family farm in Juneau is to grow food for the community. Ms. Mesdag said SSHB 116 would allow DNR to renew a lease one time so people like her who are in good standing have an opportunity to actually earn revenue at the farm site. The bill means a lot to her and her family as well as to the other growers in the state.

[10:21:25 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS offered his belief that Ms. Mesdag's husband is the lobbyist, so to speak, that he previously spoke with. He thanked Ms. Mesdag for her testimony and for being in the vanguard of mariculture in Alaska. He inquired whether there are statutory changes on Ms. Mesdag's wish list beyond what is presently in the bill that are onerous or don't create value.

MS. MESDAG responded that the bill is a great place to start. She said another change that has been talked about is regulatory and is about changing the lease terms. To get that done is a bit more tedious, so this approach was taken first as the place to start that would alleviate some of the burden on people looking to invest in the industry as well as the agencies that must regulate it. During that period new businesses are not being put to work. A lot of people are lined up waiting to

start with capital in line and the gumption to do this, but it is going to take them up to two years before they see their lease and then they start the build-out process. It takes people with vision. She isn't exactly sure what other statutory changes could be made to help the process, but she knows there is room for improvement. There needs to be due process, she advised, when talking about tideland leases. She suggested looking to DNR for ways that would help the department.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS said he realizes that regulatory changes are outside the scope but asked what those regulatory changes are.

MS. MESDAG answered it would be the duration of the lease terms, changing it from a 10-year lease to match the other DNR leases, which are 20-25 years on average for a tideland lease or land leases. This congruence for mariculture is desirable because of the length of time that it takes to have a marketable product and before farmers start seeing any revenue, and this is not even talking about profit.

[10:23:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE referenced the goal of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force to grow a \$100 million industry in 20 years. She asked Ms. Mesdag to speak to how much capital it takes to start this type of venture and the amount of capital it takes each year.

MS. MESDAG replied her small family farm has half an acre of oysters and half an acre of geoducks. She will be investing upwards of \$150,000 with the hope of making an income of about \$70,000 a year working full time with her kids. She and her husband want to provide their kids with an opportunity unique to Alaska where they can grow up as part of the family business working outside. As a micro-scale farm, she is not looking at making hundreds of thousands of dollars; rather, she is looking at making a livable wage that provides intrinsic value to her family.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE offered her understanding that it is labor intensive and that the \$70,000 would not be just Ms. Mesdag's wage, but her entire family's wage. Given the contribution that aquaculture makes to Alaska, she said it makes sense to ease the regulatory and statutory burden and she sees SSHB 116 as necessary for all aquaculture farmers.

10:26:52 AM

MS. DECKER on behalf of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) and the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (MTF) provided invited testimony in support of SSHB 116. She related that members of AFDF comprise a broad spectrum of the seafood industry and the board of directors is comprised of harvesters, processors, and support sector businesses from across Alaska. Founded in 1978, AFDF's mission is to identify opportunities common to the Alaska seafood industry and develop efficient, sustainable outcomes that provide benefits to the economy, environment, and communities.

MS. DECKER stated that the mariculture initiative is spearheaded by AFDF and grew into the Alaska Mariculture Task Force. She drew attention to the 2018 Alaska Mariculture Development Plan included in the committee packet, which has a goal of growing a \$100 million industry in 20 years. A result of MTF's work is increased interest by the private sector in aquatic farming in Alaska. This has led to a backlog of lease applications with DNR and SSHB 116 would help alleviate some of that backlog.

MS. DECKER explained the bill was yet to be written at the time of MTF's last meeting, but attendees did conceptually discuss what is contained in SSHB 116 plus had thorough discussions with DNR. Conceptually MTF agrees with SSHB 116 as a piece of a broader solution to reduce the backlog and focus DNR's time on new permit applications so those folks can get up and running.

MS. DECKER noted that another possible change discussed by MTF and DNR was potentially changing the lease term from 10 years to 20 years. She offered her understanding that this could be done via regulation but that it also has broader impacts, which is why [MTF] has not yet moved this forward. Going to a longer lease term automatically kicks in DNR's requirement for a site survey, but surveys on the water in some of these remote areas might be expensive and would also slow down the process. So, given the possible complications, the easiest and simplest solutions were started with first and this bill is that.

MS. DECKER said SSHB 116 would reduce the workload for DNR staff; prioritize DNR staff time on the new farm lease applications, which would help grow the industry; and give more certainty to farmers who have invested in site infrastructure for those first 10 years. She pointed out that DNR has many other leases that are anywhere from 20 to 50 years in terms, so this would remain a very conservative leasing program.

[10:31:41 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES inquired whether Paula Cullenberg is still involved in the Alaska Mariculture Task Force.

MS. DECKER replied no, Ms. Cullenberg has retired from Alaska Sea Grant and Heather Brandon is now the director and on the task force.

CHAIR STUTES [closed invited testimony] on SSHB 116 and opened public testimony.

[10:32:24 AM](#)

MARGO REVEIL, President, Alaska Shellfish Growers Association, testified in support of SSHB 116. She said it is a modest bill that would bring the aquaculture lease process more into line with other leases. Her farm is one of 13 in Kachemak Bay and is coming up for its second renewal because she bought an existing farm that had already been through the first renewal. Therefore, the bill would not directly impact her farm except in that it might free up the staff time and allow more effort to be put into the building of a stronger blue economy and achieving economic diversification of Alaska. As well, she would like to see DNR putting more effort into running the program.

[10:33:42 AM](#)

TAMSEN PEEPLES, Alaska Mariculture Manager, Blue Evolution, testified in support of SSHB 116. She stated the bill would improve the permitting and leasing process. Blue Evolution, she related, has worked closely over the last four years with independent farmers across Alaska to pioneering and establishing commercial seaweed mariculture in a sustainable and responsible fashion. Over this time Blue Evolution has witnessed firsthand the challenges and frustration of this entire permitting process and has seen the direct impact that this glacial pace can have on individual farms and the entire industry. There is currently a large amount of interest in the industry. She has talked with several individuals who are prospective kelp farmers and the inability to bring farms online quickly is a huge issue and most likely will hamstring further development and growth of the industry. Changing and improving the entire lease process is paramount for this industry to grow, and the hope is that this amendment will lighten the load for DNR.

MS. PEEPLES strongly urged the committee to consider that farm size is not accounted for in the bill. She reported that there have been multiple 100-plus acre farms applied for and approved, some of which are scheduled to begin operation this fall. The impacts of these farms are unknown, and it can only be assumed that larger farms will have larger impacts on the environment, the ecosystem, and communities, but to what degree is unknown. Currently there are no additional state regulations for these larger farms and Blue Evolution believes there is going to be a need for strong agency and public insight during the initial years of operation, including that initial renew process. Blue Evolution believes it is unfair and unwise to regulate farms the same regardless of their size. A single farmer with an acre or less is going to be underneath the exact same regulation, cost, and leasing process as a huge corporate entity with lots of personnel and money at its disposal. Blue Evolution believes this is especially true given the current regulations that allow large leases to be held but are only charged for the small percentage of the area of that farm that is currently being farmed; certain farmers across the state are already utilizing this. Blue Evolution believes this will lead to a land grab, which will inundate DNR even further with more applications.

MS. PEEPLES said Blue Evolution is glad progress is being made and that these amendments are happening. However, she added, more needs to be done to continue to develop the industry.

[10:36:48 AM](#)

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries, testified that her company is a processing business that helped start the oyster farms in Kachemak Bay by building an oyster cooler to assist them in getting started. She said she is concerned about the very large sized oyster farms. She wants to help the small, Alaska based businesses, but is also concerned for the affected stakeholders. Problems have been seen in Kachemak Bay when people want to expand, or new people come in, because people live in these remote areas and these are navigable waters. The April issue of National Fisherman included a full-page ad about the East Coast's problems between fishermen and these larger mariculture businesses.

MS. HILLSTRAND inquired about a definition for "small" farms and suggested consideration be given as to how big it is wanted for these farms to get. She urged that the bill be for small businesses as indicated by the sponsor. Some of the proposed farms are 150 acres or more, which is a blanket over navigable

waters. She suggested the committee look at a [size] cap or at densities within regions or bays. She advised that the notification system is archaic, so people don't even know permits have been applied for and suddenly an oyster farm appears in their area. Unforeseen issues arise and become evident after initial permits are required; therefore, a strong renewal process is needed so affected stakeholders can voice their concerns.

MS. HILLSTRAND reiterated that it is important to define "small" Alaska based businesses because oyster farming can be noisy with a lot of added traffic. She said it is important to protect the common good, which is the waters of the state of Alaska.

[10:39:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR acknowledged the concerns expressed by the last two witnesses regarding farm size. She asked whether Ms. Hillstrand had in mind a specific size or density restriction.

MS. HILLSTRAND replied that 34 percent of all the oysters from Alaska come out of Kachemak Bay, yet there is pressure to put more and more. When is enough and how large should they be? She advised that even farms of half an acre or an acre are a large size in the middle of navigable waters. She further advised that 10 acres is huge, and 150 acres is gigantic. One farm in Kachemak Bay wants to enlarge to 10 acres and she understands that about 50 comments were submitted requesting this not be done because it pretty much closes off that bay. The farm in the National Fisherman article that is causing controversy is 40 acres. She suggested this be addressed and figured out by the committee, the shareholders, the stakeholders, and DNR because the scale and magnitude of what is being done is often forgotten about and suddenly these farms located in the common waters of the state are causing controversy. Because this is still new, care must be taken to not make mistakes at the beginning to prevent problems and controversies.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR offered her understanding that SSHB 116 relates to the step after the initial tideland lease has been issued by DNR; a renewal would be something on which the local community has already weighed in. She offered her understanding that the [initial] part of the process would not be changed and Ms. Hillstrand's concern would be addressed under that review and public comment, and so there wouldn't be a lease renewal

that would be of the size or production level that became overwhelming of that particular area.

[10:43:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN observed the aquatic farm application flow chart states that the leases go through a 10-year term and will then be looked at, and what is looked at is extensive. He surmised Ms. Hillstrand's concerns about farms growing too large would be addressed by this being checked every 10 years because the check would include how the operation is going and whether the waters are staying clean and such. He noted 20 years is being considered, but 10 years seems practical. He requested Ms. Hillstrand's opinion in this regard.

MS. HILLSTRAND responded that that allows people to see what did happen during that time and voice their concerns. Things happen during the year; for example, power washers running all day long to clean gear. People who have spent a lot of money on their homes didn't realize there would be loud noise and lots of boat traffic created by the farm. She is concerned because she has dealt with many people and seen these problems arise. Ten years is a long time for the opportunity to address any problems, but at least it isn't a whole generation, which would be 20 years. In the past the magnitude of what is being done hasn't been looked at and suddenly it grows out of control. She expressed her hope that this can be kept for the small Alaskan businesses and local communities and not let it become huge international sales where the state receives little or no money.

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN stated that a company needs at least 10 years to establish itself before being put under the microscope. He concluded that the proposal is accurate, practical, and addresses concerns.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE inquired whether a farm that wanted to expand in size after the 10 years would have to start with a new application or could do so through the renewal application.

[10:46:47 AM](#)

CHRISTIANNA COLLES, Leasing Unit Manager, Southcentral Regional Land Office, Division of Mining, Land and Water, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), answered that a farm wanting to expand in size at any time during its operation would have to re-apply and the application would go back out for public notice. It is not automatic, she continued; for example, a farm in Kachemak

Bay that wanted to expand in size is currently going through the public notice process.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked whether there is a limitation on the size and scope of a farm in the current permitting process.

MS. COLLES replied yes, regulations require that a farm not take up more than one-third of a bight or bay, so DNR looks at the placement of where these leases are going to be located. She said DNR also works with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) on where a site might be located to see whether complications might be caused for navigation or marine mammals.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE inquired whether Ms. Colles has any recommendations on how to ease or address the concerns about larger corporations coming in and taking up extensive acreage.

MS. COLLES responded that new farms of this magnitude in size are new to Alaska, so there hasn't been much chance to think about how to address them. She said they are usually located in areas that are much larger and aren't in a bay or bight that might cause navigation issues. Regarding a size restriction that says if it is over a certain size it must go through the full process, she is unsure and doesn't have any clear answers to the question.

[10:48:58 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES surmised that there really isn't a size limitation because if it was a huge bay the farm could not take up more than one-third of that bay.

MS. COLLES answered correct.

[10:49:27 AM](#)

MARKOS SCHEER, CEO, Premium Aquatics, LLC, testified in support of SSHB 116. He said his farm is located south of Craig and has 127 acres for kelp and shellfish mariculture. He noted he sits on the board of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) and Southeast Conference but is testifying on behalf of Premium Aquatics. He supports SSHB 116 as a good step in the right direction, one reason being the kind of capital and grow-out time that are needed. Committing to that kind of capital on a 10-year lease materially increases the risk to potential investors. Longer lease terms provide more opportunity to get

an operation up and running, particularly when farming longer-lived shellfish species like geoduck, which take 7-9 years to reach market size. The capital and labor cost must be carried until that product reaches market size.

MR. SCHEER maintained it is incorrect that a lease fee is paid only for the area that is being used. He said a lease fee is paid for the whole area regardless of whether it is used. Under a revenue production requirement, the lease will be lost if, by year five, a farm is not producing the minimum amount of revenue on an annual basis. The regulation already provides an avenue that if something isn't being used the lease will be lost.

MR. SCHEER further maintained that the idea that these sites are large is an inaccurate assessment. For example, he said, Taylor Shellfish Farms on the West Coast is 17,000 acres. His own operation has 25 acres allocated to shellfish, which is like other farms, and the rest is kelp production. Only so much kelp can be produced on a particular acreage. In a global marketplace where the world production of kelp is some 30 million tons, a farm must have some space to do that production to be relevant. Although this is a new transition for Alaska, the relative scale of what is being done here is modest at best.

[10:53:49 AM](#)

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

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN observed the bill's original title stated, "aquatic farming and hatchery site leases", while the title of the sponsor substitute (SS) states "site leases for aquatic farming and aquatic plant and shellfish hatchery operations." He requested the sponsor to explain why the differences were included in the title.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY replied to make more clarity. She related that with the original title there were questions about whether hatcheries included salmon hatcheries and she wanted to make it clear it was aquatic and not salmon.

[10:55:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked whether it is correct that an expansion would fall outside of this renewal process and would require another public process that would allow the opportunity for concerns to be raised.

MR. SMITH responded that for granting of the initial lease DNR reaches out heavily, sends out postcards to neighbors, and must respond to every question and comment. Currently, as well as in the proposed renewal process, a renewal is publically noticed and there is a grievance process if someone is personally affected, but [the proposed process] is not as broad and time consuming and the notice is not as great. However, a proposed change in footprint or size would require a broader and involved public process.

[10:57:22 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES invited the sponsor to make closing comments.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said SSHB 116 would be an advantage to streamline the renewal process and help this business grow.

CHAIR STUTES held over SSHB 116.

HR 8-2019: INT'L YEAR OF THE SALMON

[10:58:02 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 8, Recognizing 2019 as the International Year of the Salmon and supporting an associated global initiative identifying the importance of wild salmon.

[10:58:03 AM](#)

THATCHER BROUWER, Staff, Representative Geran Tarr, Alaska State Legislature, introduced HR 8 on behalf of Representative Tarr, sponsor, and noted the sponsor has done collaborative work with other states on the resolution. He explained that HR 8 recognizes 2019 as the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) and supports an associated global initiative identifying the importance of wild salmon. It is a project launched by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO).

MR. BROUWER said he first learned about the International Year of the Salmon at an event early this year in Juneau. Since then he has continued to hear about the research and outreach that is going on as part of this global initiative. One of the research projects that has grown from the International Year of the Salmon is the first of its kind scientific expedition in the

Gulf of Alaska where 21 international scientists were on a 5-week trip and are now analyzing the data collected. Among the projects, scientists are using DNA to identify stock-specific rearing areas of all five species of salmon and determine their abundance and condition. Those who are collaborating on this research hope this project will occur annually going forward. Other projects associated with the initiative include, but are not limited to, dam removal in Maine and cleanup projects in Northern Ireland.

MR. BROUWER related that the theme of International Year of the Salmon is salmon and people in a changing world. Passing HR 8 is one way the State of Alaska can recognize the importance of salmon to the state and around the world and encourage greater research of salmon and the factors that impact their survival. In recognition that salmon are a shared resource along the West Coast, HR 8 was introduced in conjunction with measures in Washington and Oregon. The committee will be hearing from the representatives in these states that the sponsor worked with.

MR. BROUWER noted the health of salmon populations across the Northern Hemisphere varies, but even the strongest populations face threats from both humans and the changing environment. Scientists still have much to learn about salmon lifecycles, impacts of a warming climate, and increased development. All along the West Coast, strong subsistence, sport, and commercial fisheries are greatly important to the culture and the economy. Now, though, a number of those salmon runs are struggling, making it more important than ever to work collaboratively to do the research needed to ensure that salmon are here for generations to come. Up and down the West Coast and across the Northern Hemisphere salmon have sustained humans and been celebrated since the beginning of time. By passing HR 8, the legislature will acknowledge that 2019 is International Year of the Salmon and bring attention to the research and events in conjunction with this global initiative.

CHAIR STUTES opened invited testimony.

[11:01:17 AM](#)

TYSON FICK testified in support of HR 8. He stated he is currently a commercial fisherman, but has been a sport fisherman, sport fishing guide, and has lived on the Kuskokwim River and participated in subsistence fisheries. He said that, for him, salmon is life and every year is the International Year of the Salmon. The opportunity to celebrate something everyone

agrees on is appreciated. The capitol is the place to argue about policies and how to address things, but hopefully HR 8 is an opportunity to bring together people who like salmon and science and who hope to learn from other places. Salmon is something that unites people more than divides them and Alaskans like to eat and look at them. Salmon have been lost all over the world and are mostly gone from Europe and from the East Coast of the U.S. When there is talk about bringing back salmon it is about tens of fish, not the tens or hundreds of millions like are seen in Alaska. There is a real opportunity in Alaska to celebrate that and to continue Alaska's leadership on fisheries management. The ideal of sustainable management was put into the state constitution in 1959. Now, Alaska is at an important time in talking about how to handle the other uses that are had in the state. By following Alaska's lead, the overfishing issue in the U.S. was largely solved. He urged committee members to support HR 8.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS inquired about Mr. Fick's present affiliation.

MR. FICK replied he is skipper of the F/V Heather Anne and owner of Taku River Reds.

[11:05:16 AM](#)

ERIN HARRINGTON, Executive Director, The Salmon Project, testified in support of HR 8. She noted she is a member of a Bristol Bay salmon fishing household. She has some perspective from having already done some work with Mark Saunders who oversees the International Year of the Salmon. For a couple of years, she has been part of a larger collective called Salmon Connect that has been working to have conversations about salmon and the ways that it connects with people's lives in the state. Some of her colleagues from Salmon Connect have already had the opportunity to travel to Oregon and Washington to learn about some of the things that have happened in those states and the loss that they've experienced. Her Alaska colleagues found their trip to the Lower 48 extremely instructive, which speaks to the value of this kind of cross-jurisdictional communication, collaboration, and learning from one another. Alaska is fortunate to have people who are still extremely connected to salmon, it is not just as a token thing. People in Seattle love salmon, but they love it as a memory. In Alaska salmon are still part of people's daily, annual, and seasonal lives. She and her colleagues can show their international and cross-

jurisdictional partners what it is like to have lives that are still truly connected to salmon.

MS. HARRINGTON related that The Salmon Project has done a significant amount of statewide research and found that three out of four Alaskans consider themselves to be personally connected to salmon; nine out of ten Alaskans use salmon as an important Alaskan value. This crosses political stripe, socioeconomic, and region, and is something that is shared by most Alaskans regardless of politics. The Salmon Project has come to believe that this is foundational in Alaska and it isn't just about this resource, but is a medium through which people talk about the values that they have for their families and the aspirations they have for their children and the way they want to live on the landscape as Alaskans. So, she cannot speak strongly enough to the import of maintaining a robust salmon connected way of life in Alaska and HR 8 is something that can further Alaskans' adventure on that path.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR remarked that the phrase "salmon connected way of life" should be used more.

[11:08:22 AM](#)

JILL WEITZ, Campaign Director, Salmon Beyond Borders Campaign, testified in support of HR 8. She said that today she is providing the committee with her subjective perspective, one that is rooted in her constant learning of how salmon connect people. On a global scale, but primarily here in Southeast Alaska, salmon connect people to the ancient Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian peoples. She supports the global initiative to build resilience for salmon and people and celebrate with the committee the International Year of the Salmon.

MS. WEITZ said the effort to defend and sustain the salmon of the transboundary Taku, Stikine, and Unuk rivers has united nearly every sector of Southeast Alaska. The Salmon Beyond Borders Campaign partners with local Alaska businesses, each commercial fishing gear group, sport fishermen, tour operators, and lawmakers. It works in close coordination with tribes and First Nations in British Columbia. These three rivers originate in Northwest British Columbia and flow into Southeast Alaska. They have served as centers of culture for centuries and as the lifeblood of the largest salmon producing rivers in this region, including producing 80 percent of [the region's] king salmon.

MS. WEITZ stated she will show the committee a video titled "Salmon Is Life." The video is a product of a Salmon Beyond Borders tour through Northwest British Columbia during the harvest season of 2018. The takeaways are that each community is different, each tradition is different, but everyone has a salmon story, and everyone's auntie is the best at smoking salmon. The video was first shown at the IYS launch event in Vancouver in 2018, which was attended by 150 representatives of the salmon community in the Pacific and Atlantic basins. Indigenous and non-indigenous leaders from the U.S., Canada, Russia, Korea, and Japan demonstrated support for IYS.

[11:11:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DEBRA LEKANOFF, House District 40, Washington State Legislature, stated she is honored to serve the State of Washington and to provide Washington's voice in protecting and restoring the salmon in partnership with Alaska and Oregon to ensure there are salmon for today and generations to come.

MS. LEKANOFF shared that she is a Tlingit from Yakutat, Alaska, who has lived in Washington state for 20 years. She has returned to Yakutat to provide economic development and governmental training to her community. As a Native American woman, she always gives back to the future, to the leaders of tomorrow, and to the past who built the road for today. She is of the Raven moiety, of the Dog Salmon and the Owl Clan. Her Tlingit name means meeting of the springtime frogs and a time of change. Her house and name reflect her values and the laws that she lives by. They guide her decision making as a mother and as a lawmaker. If the salmon are gone, not only does she face losing the very spirit that guides her, but lawmakers face the impact to their rural workforces, economies, and quality of life as people know it in Alaska, Washington, and Oregon.

REPRESENTATIVE LEKANOFF said it is a great accomplishment to stand together to celebrate the International Year of the Salmon and work in collaboration on salmon research and outreach around the theme of salmon and people in the changing world. People in Washington state applaud the partnership between the three states, the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission, and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization.

REPRESENTATIVE LEKANOFF related that Washington state faces the reality that its waters, habitats, and resources have been deeply impacted. Fewer is the people's truth in Washington state. Only one river in the Lower 48 - the Skagit - produces

all six species of wild salmon. It is time to stand together to support the common science, policies, and laws to address the restoration and protection of salmon. Long before Washington was the apple state it was known as the salmon state. Washington is honored and pleased to stand with Alaska and Oregon in sustaining one of the most honored resources to all our economies, cultures, and quality of life.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR thanked Representative Lekanoff for the collaboration between their offices and said she looks forward to continuing to work together.

CHAIR STUTES stated that she is honored to be the representative for Yakutat.

[11:15:54 AM](#)

MS. WEITZ showed the "Salmon Is Life" video to the committee. After the video she pointed out that the remark, "salmon is life," was made by each of the people interviewed for the video and that the remark was unprompted. She expressed her honor to work with people throughout the region on the international issue of salmon, which requires collaboration. Salmon are a symbol of resilience, a symbol of complete function, and a symbol of Alaska. She said her organization supports HR 8 and the efforts to better establish salmon management and policies in Alaska and throughout the British Columbia region that are rooted in sound science and information.

[11:18:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KEN HELM, House District 34, Oregon State Legislature, testified in support of HR 8. He said he is happy to be working with Representatives Tarr and Lekanoff in a multi-state effort to raise the awareness about wild salmon. He related that Oregon has a similar resolution before its chambers, HCR 35, and 41 of his House and Senate colleagues have already signed on to the resolution. There is much enthusiasm in Oregon for giving more attention to the state's wild salmon stocks, the rivers they live in, and the habitat that those rivers flow through.

MR. HELM noted that Alaska, Washington, and Oregon have a great history and heritage of both commercial salmon harvest, tribal harvest, and sport fishing. He said Oregon faces the same challenges that Alaska and Washington face in that over time Oregon's wild salmon stocks have gone into decline and continue

to do so despite Oregon's best efforts. However, a couple of river systems are bright spots in that they have been left alone for long enough to allow wild salmon to regenerate themselves. He said he applauds the efforts of the advocates of these resolutions in all three states, is proud to be part of that, and looks forward to continued collaboration around the protection and promotion of wild salmon.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR thanked Representative Helm for the collaboration. She pointed out that political boundaries don't mean much to wild salmon and it is becoming increasingly important to be collaborating.

[11:22:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN noted the resolution doesn't mention areas of salmon that are stressed. He pointed out that in Alaska, eight of the twelve stocks of concern are in the Susitna-Yentna drainage. Lodges up and down those rivers that catered to sport fishermen are now gone because the fish are gone. The fish are gone because these areas are stressed. He suggested language be put into the resolution that identifies the stocks and areas of concern. He further noted the resolution talks about Alaska Natives, but his family depends on salmon.

MS. WEITZ agreed and said the resolution is an opportunity to home in on those priority areas throughout Alaska that are productive, that once were productive, and that productivity is wanted to remain. She expressed her willingness to work with Representative Tarr, sponsor of HR 8, to address Representative Neuman's concerns and incorporate them into the resolution language.

[11:25:09 AM](#)

MARK SAUNDERS, IYS Director-North Pacific Region, International Year of the Salmon, North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission, testified in support of HR 8. He stated that the commission has been around for 26 years and was established by treaty between Canada, the U.S., Japan, Korea, and Russia. It was initially started to enforce stoppage of the high seas' driftnet fishery. It has a larger mandate around conservation of salmon in the high seas and conservation in the adjacent waters. He has been to Anchorage where he met with the Salmon Connect group. He noted that there are representatives in the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) who work closely with the commission on

salmon science and the International Year of the Salmon in general.

MR. SAUNDERS related that as salmon are being lost Alaska is a stronghold in wanting to sustain them. Alaska is not alone in dealing with big changes and the surprises being seen in the declines of chinook salmon and pinks. From his travels around the globe in the Northern Hemisphere he has found that conversations are unique to each area, but many of the issues being dealt with are the same. The decline that started in the marine systems in the early 1990s also started to happen at the same time in the Atlantic. It is not a coincidence that it started to happen in the early 1990s and despite that big signal, scientists are still not working together in a way that they can start to understand that and put the clues together.

MR. SAUNDERS explained that while this is the focal year for the International Year of the Salmon, the initiative itself will go on through 2022. The idea is that by 2022 the connections will have been made and a shared ability within science, social, and regulatory bodies will have been built to learn from each other. Things are being done in Alaska that the rest of the hemisphere needs to understand. Alaska needs to be working with the organizations that are working on the bigger problems of the impact of climate on fresh water and coastal and high seas. Right across those life histories [IYS] is working on projects to link people. Alaska has a lot to learn from other parts of the world, but also has a big story to tell. He looks forward to Alaskans engaging and continuing to engage in the initiative.

MR. SAUNDERS noted the initiative is also in the middle of raising money from governments and private foundations in the order of tens of millions to facilitate this work that is being taken on across the hemisphere. He looks forward to working with Representative Tarr and organizations like Salmon Beyond Borders. He offered his support for HR 8 and thanked the committee for its work for the betterment of salmon and people.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR said she is excited to hear about the collaboration and that it will be ongoing for a few more years. She noted that things are being learned about migration patterns in the ocean and that management regimes need to be thought about. She looks forward to the work that Mr. Saunders is doing and urged that relationships be strengthened in working on protecting wild salmon populations.

[11:31:20 AM](#)

DOUG MECUM, Deputy Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce, testified in support of HR 8. He stated that HR 8 recognizes 2019 as the International Year of the Salmon (IYS) and supports the associated global research and outreach initiative. He said NOAA Fisheries supports and is participating in the coordinated development of the IYS initiative sponsored by the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NPAFC) and the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO). The Alaska salmon fishery plays an integral role in the world's salmon production and the Alaska salmon fishery, capably managed by ADF&G, is the most valuable commercial fishery in the U.S. Sustaining Alaska's wild salmon populations is essential in preserving salmon cultures that have existed for thousands of years.

MR. MECUM noted that the overall theme of the IYS is salmon and people in a changing world. He explained that the extraordinary life histories of salmon expose them to many environmental and anthropogenic factors influencing their health and abundance. The IYS seeks to raise awareness of what humans can do to better ensure salmon and their varied habitats are conserved and restored. The IYS envisions an expansion of salmon research efforts on the high seas and nearshore waters as well as a full year of education, outreach, and public engagement. The IYS provides a platform for advancing an understanding of salmon species, as well as promoting conservation, restoration, community support, and ocean literacy. Additionally, the IYS provides NOAA an opportunity to highlight its programs.

MR. MECUM concluded by pointing out that salmon affect more people culturally, economically, and recreationally than any other fish species. Understanding how a change in climate may influence their ocean and freshwater habitats, distributions, and productivity is an increasingly important concern to management agencies, the fishing industry, tribes, recreational users, and the general public. He said NOAA Fisheries appreciates the committee's support of HR 8 and the increased awareness, support, and engagement that it will provide.

[11:34:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR thanked Mr. Mecum for his testimony and his extensive knowledge from his work at ADF&G and NOAA. She said she would like to learn about the barriers to multi-state and international collaboration as it relates to research projects

and what could be done at the State of Alaska level to help better integrate some of those efforts.

MR. MECUM responded that the resolution is helpful, and he is thankful for the resolution because it is a way to convince others to support the development of this. He pointed out that it is not all rainbows and unicorns when talking about funding initiatives like this and international collaboration is very difficult because it requires diplomacy and sustained effort.

[11:36:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN observed that the Endangered Species Act is mentioned in the resolution on page 2, lines 27-28. He said he has talked to many people in Alaska who believe that the Marine Mammal Protection Act has had a devastating effect on management of Alaska's salmon and that it should be changed to the Marine Mammal Management Act to manage damage from all the predators of salmon that are protected under that act. He asked whether Mr. Mecum thinks that should be one of the clauses in the resolution and part of the discussion.

MR. MECUM replied that it is the legislature's decision. He said NOAA administers the Marine Mammal Protection Act. One of the great success stories was getting the eastern population of Steller sea lions off the endangered species list, and he was a part of that effort. This has allowed for some of the legal removals of sea lions in the Columbia and other places with endangered species. Fortunately, Alaska doesn't have any listed species of salmon because Alaska has taken care of business by protecting the habitat, having a good strong management system, and public involvement in that process. Alaska is a model for the world. In places like [the Columbia], habitat loss has led to some real problems and predation by marine mammals is an issue. He said NOAA administers that according to the law and if people think portions of the law should be changed, they can pursue those changes legislatively.

[11:38:48 AM](#)

CHRIS SERGEANT, Research Scientist, Flathead Lake Bio Station, University of Montana, testified in support of HR 8. He noted that while he is with the University of Montana, he is based permanently in Juneau. He conveyed his support for International Year of the Salmon and continued scientific research on this iconic group of fish. He said his work focuses on three salmon rich transboundary rivers shared between Alaska

and British Columbia - the Taku, Stikine, and Unuk. His interest is studying how the actions of humans modify freshwater habitat for salmon and affect their survival.

MR. SERGEANT noted he grew up on the shores of Puget Sound and studied salmon in that region during the first half of his fisheries career. He watched in real time as Puget Sound and Columbia River populations dwindled, but he was heartened to see his friends and colleagues in urban Washington state recognize the value of salmon recovery. He feels lucky to have worked in Alaska for the past eight years and see so many thriving salmon populations. However, some populations are showing signs of decline, so continued research toward better understanding what sustains productive freshwater ecosystems is vital to ensuring that Alaska's communities can continue to pursue a lifestyle fueled in large part by salmon. Alaskans are faced with an unprecedented opportunity to preserve the state's sustainable fisheries using science-based management.

MR. SERGEANT allowed that the march toward understanding salmon may feel like a slow plod, but said the journey is worthy of continued pursuit. He said Isaac Walton's book, The Complete Angler, published in 1653, might be considered the first salmon experiment described in writing. It describes how Atlantic salmon were marked with sewing thread as juvenile fish and then observed returning to the same river as spawning adults, demonstrating the ability of salmon to accurately navigate back to their place of birth. Over 300 years later in his influential book on Pacific salmon, University of Washington professor Tom Quinn, describes a group of sockeye salmon caught in a single purse seine set in the Gulf of Alaska where all the fish were tagged and released back to the ocean. These individual salmon, sharing space in one tiny speck of the ocean, eventually swam in wildly divergent directions across their range - some returning to rivers in British Columbia like the Skeena and the Nass, and some returning to Alaska watersheds in places like Kodiak Island or Bristol Bay. After almost four centuries, however, scientists still cannot definitively say how salmon return to their home waters from a sprawling open ocean and [scientists] are still not great at predicting when salmon runs will be strong or weak each year. But one thing that can be said with certainty - if enough salmon are left alone in the water to return to clean rivers with abundant spawning grounds, they will thrive for generations to come.

MR. SERGEANT said the diversity of salmon caught from that purse seine set in the Gulf of Alaska holds some nice symbolism for

the International Year of the Salmon: it takes a special kind of animal to continue holding the rapt attention of humans for so many years. He said the committee's support of HR 8 matters because it shows that Alaskans support science and wild salmon.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR thanked Mr. Sergeant for his testimony.

CHAIR STUTES inquired about Mr. Sergeant working for the University of Montana but being stationed in Juneau.

MR. SERGEANT replied he is stationed in Juneau and specifically is focused on Alaska/British Columbia transboundary watersheds.

[11:42:41 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[11:45:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NEUMAN moved to report [HR] 8 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HR 8 was reported from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

[11:46:55 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 11:47 p.m.