

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

March 18, 2020

5:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Chuck Kopp
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Sarah Vance

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Mark Neuman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 247

"An Act relating to the fish and game fund; establishing the sport fishing enhancement surcharge; relating to the repeal of the sport fishing facility surcharge; providing for an effective date by amending the effective date of sec. 21, ch. 18, SLA 2016; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 247(FSH) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 247

SHORT TITLE: SPORT FISHING ENHANCEMENT SURCHARGE

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/12/20	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/12/20	(H)	FSH, FIN
02/20/20	(H)	FSH AT 11:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
02/20/20	(H)	Heard & Held
02/20/20	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
02/27/20	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
02/27/20	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
03/03/20	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/03/20	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
03/05/20	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/05/20	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
03/10/20	(H)	FSH AT 11:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

03/10/20 (H) Heard & Held
03/10/20 (H) MINUTE (FSH)
03/12/20 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/12/20 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
03/17/20 (H) FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/17/20 (H) -- Meeting Postponed to 5:00 pm 3/18/20 --
03/18/20 (H) FSH AT 5:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

MATT GRUENING, Staff
Representative Louise Stutes
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the proposed committee substitute for HB 247, on behalf of the House Rules Standing Committee, sponsor by request of the governor.

DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered feedback pertaining to the proposed CS for HB 247.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[5:04:24 PM](#)

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. Representatives Stutes, Kopp, Tarr, and Vance were present at the call to order.

HB 247-SPORT FISHING ENHANCEMENT SURCHARGE

[5:04:46 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 247, "An Act relating to the fish and game fund; establishing the sport fishing enhancement surcharge; relating to the repeal of the sport fishing facility surcharge; providing for an effective date by amending the effective date of sec. 21, ch 18, SLA 2016; and providing for an effective date."

[5:05:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 247, Version 31-GH2165\U, Klein, 3/16/20,

as a work draft.

5:05:22 PM

CHAIR STUTES objected to the motion, for the purpose of discussion.

5:05:34 PM

MATT GRUENING, Staff, Representative Louise Stutes, Alaska State Legislature, presented the CS for HB 247, ("Version U"), on behalf of the House Rules Standing Committee, sponsor by request of the governor. He stated that page 1 of Version U would change the title of HB 247, by removing "establishing the sport fishing enhancement surcharge; relating to the repeal of the sport fishing facility surcharge" and replacing it with "relating to a sport fishing surcharge".

MR. GRUENING explained that in addition to the title change, Version U would make three basic changes to HB 247. The first change has to do with ADF&G allocations; it addresses the [sport fishing enhancement surcharge], which, under the original bill version would have been reduced by \$5.00 [as shown on page 2, lines 26, through page 3, line 5]. Version U would change that reduction to \$2.50, [as shown on page 2, line 31, through page 3, line 10]. He indicated that the amount of \$2.50 was a compromise reached by the committee.

MR. GRUENING said the second change would split the surcharge into two different allocations. [This change is in Section 1, on page 1, line 13, through page 2, line 5, which read as follows:]

(1) \$2.50 of each surcharge collected to fisheries management, fisheries research, invasive species suppression and eradication, habitat restoration, and ongoing maintenance of the department's sport fishing facilities and sport fishing hatcher facilities; and

(2) the remainder of each surcharge collected to sport fishing stock enhancement and ongoing maintenance of the department's sport fishing hatchery facilities.

MR. GRUENING explained that in the original bill version, the allocation had been restricted to: "for maintenance and enhancement of sport fisheries".

MR. GRUENING stated that the third change under Version U was the removal of the special nonresident military small game and sport fishing license, that was on [page 3, lines 3-4 of the original bill version], because ADF&G has discontinued that license.

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CHAIR STUTES removed her objection to the motion to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 247, Version 31-GH2165\U, Klein, 3/16/20, as a work draft. There being no further objection, Version U was before the committee.

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DOUG VINCENT-LANG, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, in response to Chair Stutes, said he had not seen the exact language of Version U but was familiar with the concepts. He expressed that the original version of HB 247 was carefully crafted by ADF&G in an attempt to reach a compromise between the "commitment we had made originally when the bill went away, versus having it move forward." He expressed ADF&G's willingness to work with [the committee] to see that HB 247 moves forward.

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REPRESENTATIVE TARR commented that she is fine with the compromise of a slightly reduced fee amount but thinks that, in moving forward with the financial challenges the state is facing, there will need to be opportunities for Alaskans to contribute to things that they really care about. She expressed that she would have supported keeping the fee the same and going towards department needs; however, she said that she will support the compromise that reduces the fee, and she hopes that ADF&G will continue to do good work to keep the fisheries healthy.

[5:09:11 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES remarked that "it's a good deal when you like it a little bit and you don't like it a little bit," which she said she thinks is the current situation. She expressed that she, her staff, and the commissioner were able to come to a compromise with which they are comfortable.

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REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to report CSHB 247, Version 31-GH2165\U, Klein, 3/16/20, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHB 247(FSH) was reported from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

[5:09:56 PM](#)

CHAIR STUTES remarked that there have been a lot of concerns from the fishing communities about how the COVID-19 outbreak might affect the processing, shipping, and price of seafood this coming season, and she expressed that it is not going to be a good year. She stated that as the chair of the House Special Committee on Fisheries and the Representative of a fishing district, she shares those concerns. She noted for anyone watching that talks are ongoing with processors regarding their plans to provide for the work force this season, and that work is underway at the legislature currently to help support small businesses and the workforce through a difficult time.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 5:11 p.m.