

SCOMM

102:24



SENATOR DAVE DONLEY

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SPONSOR STATEMENT - CS SB 7(RLS) am **Reducing Fees for Resident Combination Licenses and Increasing Fees for** **Non-Resident Sport Fishing Licenses and Tags**

Senate Bill 7 was introduced in response to escalating misuse of Alaska's sport fish resources by non-residents who commercially harvest, process and sell sport caught fish. Some non-residents use proceeds from the sale of sport caught fish to pay for annual vacations in Alaska. **SB 7 raises non-resident sport fishing license and tag fees and creates a tool for enforcement officers to more easily trace those non-residents who abuse our sport fish resources.**

SB 7 increases the 3 day non-resident sport fishing license fee from \$15 to \$20, creates a seven day non-resident license for \$30 and increases the non-resident 14 day license fee from \$30 to \$50.

SB 7 increases the annual non-resident sport fishing license fee from \$50 to \$150 and adds a provision restricting purchase to non-residents who work as sport fish guides. Proof of a current Alaska Business license or employment by a licensed sport fish guide and proof of either a current air taxi or commercial "6 pack" boat operator license is required to purchase the annual non-resident license. **Non-residents who do not work as guides will not be able to purchase an annual license therefore the Department will be able to more easily trace non-resident abusers of our sport fish resources who will be forced to continually purchase 14 day licenses throughout the season.**

SB 7 increases the 3 day non-resident anadromous king salmon tag fee from \$15 to \$20, creates a seven day non-resident king salmon tag for \$30 and increases the non-resident 14 day tag fee from \$35 to \$50.

In addition, SB 7 reduces the cost of the three types of resident combination licenses. **Currently, the cost for combination licenses for residents are exactly the same, whether each license is purchased individually, or as a combination.** SB 7 reduces the hunting and trapping, and the hunting and sport fishing licenses by \$1, and reduces the hunting, trapping and sport fishing license by \$2, creating an incentive for residents to purchase combination licenses. Purchasing combination licenses will save the State approximately \$1-2 in fees per combination license sold, thereby mitigating any loss of revenue, and will result in less paperwork for the Department to process.

If you have further questions, please contact Karen Brand of my staff at (907) 465-3892.

DD/kb 3/10/97

January-May: STATE CAPITOL • JUNEAU, AK • 99801-1182 • (907) 465-3892 • FAX: (907) 465-6595
June-December: 716 W. 4TH AVE. • STE. 430 • ANCHORAGE, AK • 99501 • (907) 258-8181 • FAX: (907) 258-1648

MEMBER: Senate Finance Committee • Legislative Budget & Audit Committee
• Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee

Produced in House



United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
PO Box 22427
Juneau, Alaska 99802
(907) 586-5860 Fax (907) 780-6621

March 24, 1997

Dear Committee Members of the Fisheries Committee,

RE: SB 7

The United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters Association supports SB 7. We would like to thank you for your efforts in curtailing the ability of non resident sports fishermen to process and then sell seafood by staying all summer in Alaska.

We would like to support the amendment of adding the holder of a Commercial Fisheries Limited Entry Permit (CFEC) under Section 5 (8) as a person who may hold a nonresident annual sport fishing license.

We feel this amendment is important for the non-resident commercial fisherman who spends long seasons in Alaska. Some of these fishermen will sport fish for other species in order to supplement their diet with fish and shellfish. As an example the fishermen who will come up for SE herring sac roe fishery that might wait on the grounds for 3 weeks. While they wait to fish herring they will sport fish for king salmon, halibut or rockfish and throw out a crab or shrimp pot to feed themselves. This person would then come up for the summer salmon season which is 5 months for SE and do the same, eating some salmon out of their nets but supplementing their diet with crab, shrimp, halibut, clams etc. We would like to allow this option by having CFEC permits listed as a possibility for holding an annual non-resident sport fish license.

Thank you for your consideration of adding a non resident CFEC permit holder as a person who may have an annual sport fishing license. We support this bill and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kathryn L Hansen
Executive Director USAG



Senator David Donley
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
via fax

Re: Senate Bill No. 7 Modifying Sport Fishing License Fees

Dear Senator Donley,

Thank you for forwarding us a copy of the subject bill. The bill, when signed into law, would accomplish many positive things for the resident sport angler.

- It would reduce aggregate fees should he or she purchase multiple licenses (fishing/hunting/trapping).
- It would bring the level of non-resident fees more closely in line with other states and provinces. It would show the visitors that we Alaskans value our fisheries as much as they do theirs. Based on comments I have heard from our visitors, there is no doubt in my mind that the visitors will gladly pay this small increase to participate in Alaska's incredible fisheries.
- The elimination of the non-resident annual fishing license will provide ADF&G with data that could enumerate who is staying for an extended period and might be a lead sheet for investigations into the illegal sale of sport caught fish. Most residents abhor the illegal sale of sport caught fish by non-residents and want this illegal activity eliminated.

The Alaska Sportfishing Association supports this bill and urges its passage.

Phil Cutler, President

Fish sting

Good folks, bad deeds

9/12/96
ADN

Just how many folks are ripping off Alaska's sportfish and selling them Outside? Nobody knows despite the recent busts on the Kenai Peninsula, yet the evidence suggests visiting fishermen are canning salmon up and down the Kenai.

The fishermen involved hardly fit the profile of criminals. "They're your average tourist coming to Alaska," says Fish and Wildlife Protection Sgt. Jim Cockrell. But they are out to pay for their vacation with canning ventures.

The fact that the perpetrators look more like Uncle Bud than Baby Face Nelson doesn't diminish the insult to Alaska's salmon fishery. Canning sportfish and selling them is against the law. It's criminal behavior. And no amount of whining "I only wanted to pay for my Alaska summer" changes that. How would the people of Arizona, where canned Kenai sportfish are sold, respond if they knew Alaskans were stealing their resources to pay for winter vacations?

Solutions are not readily at hand. Sportfishing and commercial fishing alike depend in large measure on the integrity of the fishermen. The state can't put a Fish and Wildlife Protection officer in every campground. Sting operations are costly and time-consuming. Changing the possession limits affects the honest and dishonest alike and is bound to provoke controversy.

But clearly it's time for the Legislature and the Fish Board to pay attention to the everyday folks stealing fish. Lawmakers and board members can gather information, ask questions, and explore the best way to protect the fishery. Then they can determine who should take the appropriate action.

Alaska welcomes visitors who want to explore its streams and land some salmon for dinner. But it doesn't welcome folks who come here with thievery on their minds.

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSSB 7(RLS) am

1 Page 2, line 17, following "proof of":

2 Insert "(A)"

3 Page 2, line 22, following "Guard":

4 Insert "; or

5 (B) a current entry permit or interim-use permit issued by
6 the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission"

AMENDMENT[#]

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: CSSB 7(RLS) am

1 Page 2, line 17, following "proof of":

2 Insert "(A)"

3 Page 2, line 22, following "Guard":

4 Insert ": or

5 (B) a current commercial fishing crewmember license issued

6 by the department"

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 7(RLS)

Revision Date: 2/28/97
Title: Hunting Sport Fish Trapping Fees/Licenses

Dept. Affected: Fish and Game
BRU: Sport Fish
Component: Sport Fish

Sponsor: Senator Donley
Requester: Senate Rules

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 464

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 98	FY 99	FY 100	FY 101	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (1024)	1,024.4	4,179.4	4,262.9	4,348.2	4,435.2	4,523.9
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
1024 Fish and Game Fund	1,024.4	4,179.4	4,262.9	4,348.2	4,435.2	4,523.9
TOTAL	1,024.4	4,179.4	4,262.9	4,348.2	4,435.2	4,523.9

Estimate of any current year (FY96) cost: \$ 0.0

POSITIONS

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Adoption of SB 7 as written, would result in a larger annual contribution to the Fish and Game Fund due to the changes in structure and price of non-resident sport fishing licenses and king salmon tags proposed in this legislation. The department's confidence in the models used to prepare this fiscal note is not high. Our ability to project market reaction to substantial changes in license structures and fees is limited.

See attached page for assumptions.

Prepared by: Kevin Delaney
Division: Sport Fish

Phone: 465-4180
Date: 2/28/97

Approved by Commissioner:
Agency:

Frank Rue
Fish and Game

Date: 3.3.97

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Assumptions used for license revenue calculations: (Bill becomes effective 1/1/98)

- Revenue calculations are based on Fiscal Year 1996 license sales statistics.
- Approximately 25% of sport fish license sales occur in the first half of a given calendar year (based on 3 year average 1993-1995). With this in mind, FY98 revenues are only 25% of calculated total for fiscal year.
- Annual license sales growth is estimated at 2% for revenue projections.
- The table below reflects Fiscal Year 1998 revenue projections with and without the enactment of this bill.
- Residents will purchase combination licenses out of convenience rather than for cost savings, therefore, same number of combination licenses will be purchased in the future.
- Nonresidents who currently purchase an annual license (other than ~850 who would qualify for the annual nonresident license as outlined in SB 7) will be forced to purchase a series of 14-day licenses. 50% will purchase two while the remaining 50% will purchase one 14-day license.
- Of those nonresidents who currently purchase a 14-day license, 75% will continue to do so, while 25% will now purchase a 7-day license.
- Of those nonresidents who currently purchase a 3-day license, 60% will purchase a 7-day license, 20% will purchase two 1-day licenses and 20% will purchase a single 1-day license.
- Those nonresidents who purchased a 1-day license will continue to do so.
- Of those nonresident hunters who currently purchase an annual sport fish license, 50% will now purchase two 14-day licenses and 50% will purchase one 14-day license.
- Of those nonresident hunters who currently purchase a 14-day license, 50% will now purchase a 14-day license and the remaining 50% will purchase a single 7-day license.
- Nonresidents who currently purchase an annual king salmon tag will be forced to purchase a series of 14-day tags. 50% will purchase two 14 day tags, while the remaining 25% will now purchase a single 14-day tag, and 25% will purchase a 7-day tag.
- Of those nonresidents who currently purchase a 3-day king salmon tag, 60% will purchase a 7-day tag, 20% will purchase two 1-day tags and the remaining 20% will purchase a single 1-day tag.
- Those nonresidents who purchased a 1 day king salmon tag will continue to do so.

Description	*Without SB7		*With SB7		
	# SOLD FY98	Revenue FY98	# SOLD FY98	Revenue FY98	Revenue Net (+/-)
* Sport Fish Revenue Portion only.					
Resident Sport Fishing	130,246	\$1,953.7	130,247	\$1,953.7	(\$0.0)
Resident Sport Fish & Hunt* (37.5%)	37,456	\$561.8	37,456	\$547.8	(\$14.0)
Resident, SF, Hunt & Trap* (27.3%)	5,186	\$77.9	5,186	\$75.0	(\$2.8)
Resident King Salmon Stamp	88,934	\$889.3	88,934	\$889.3	\$0.0
Nonresident Sport Fish	24,334	\$1,216.7	850	\$127.5	(\$1,089.2)
Nonresident 14-day Sport Fish	87,184	\$2,615.5	103,314	\$5,165.7	\$2,550.2
Nonresident 7-day Sport Fish	NA	\$0.0	60,664	\$1,819.9	\$1,819.9
Nonresident 3-day Sport Fish	63,193	\$947.9	NA	\$0.0	(\$947.9)
Nonresident 1-day Sport Fish	68,003	\$680.0	105,973	\$1,059.7	\$379.7
Nonresident Military Sport Fish	5,600	\$84.0	5,600	\$84.0	\$0.0
Nonresident Hunt & Sport Fish* (37%)	1,165	\$58.2	NA	\$0.0	(\$58.2)
Nonresident Hunt & 14-day SF* (26.1%)	1,905	\$57.2	NA	\$0.0	(\$57.2)
Nonresident Military SF & Small Game (37.5%)	301	\$4.5	301	\$4.5	(\$0.0)
Military King Salmon Stamp	2,322	\$46.4	2,322	\$46.4	\$0.0
Nonresident King Salmon Stamp	35,683	\$1,248.9	NA	\$0.0	(\$1,248.9)
Nonresident 14-day King Salmon Stamp	NA	\$0.0	44,604	\$2,230.2	\$2,230.2
Nonresident 7-day King Salmon Stamp	NA	\$0.0	26,842	\$805.3	\$805.3
Nonresident 3-day King Salmon Stamp	29,952	\$449.3	NA	\$0.0	(\$449.3)
Nonresident 1-day King Salmon Stamp	35,028	\$350.3	52,999	\$530.0	\$179.7
Duplicate KS Stamp	1,168	\$5.8	1,168	\$5.8	\$0.0
TOTALS		\$11,247.5		\$15,344.9	\$4,097.4

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL NO: CSSB 7(RLS)

1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: 3/4/97

Dept. Affected: Public Safety

Title: An Act relating to the amendment of hunting
and sport fishing license and tag fees

BRU: Fish and Wildlife Protection

Component: Detachments

Sponsor: Senator Donley

Requestor: S. Rules

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 0490

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (inflation not included)

OPERATING	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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CHANGE IN REVENUES () Revenue Code	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program						
1006 GF/MHTIA						
Other						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

Estimate of current year (FY 97) impact: \$ -0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

This Bill is consistent with the Division's program objectives, and will not adversely impact the budget.

Prepared By: Captain Joel L. Hard

Phone 269-5409

Division: Fish and Wildlife Protection

Date: March 4, 1997

Approved by Commissioner: *Dee Smith*

Date: 3/4/97

Agency: Ronald L. Otte, Department of Public Safety

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ANALYSIS CONTINUED:

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO: CSSB 7(RLS)am

Revision Date: 3/21/97
 Title: An Act relating to the amendment of hunting and sport fishing license and tag fees
 Sponsor: Senator Donley
 Requestor: H.FSH

Dept. Affected: Public Safety
 BRU: Fish and Wildlife Protection
 Component: Detachments

COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 0490

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars) (inflation not included)

OPERATING	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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CHANGE IN REVENUES () Revenue Code	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program						
1006 GF/MHTIA						
Other						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

Estimate of current year (FY 97) impact: \$ -0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

This Bill is consistent with the Division's program objectives, and will not adversely impact the budget.

Prepared By: Captain Joel L. Hard
 Division: Fish and Wildlife Protection

Phone: 269-5409
 Date: March 21, 1997

Approved by Commissioner: *Ronald L. Otto*
 Agency: Ronald L. Otto, Department of Public Safety

Date: 3/21/97

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ANALYSIS CONTINUED:

Salmon sellers targeted

Undercover agent roams campgrounds

By TOM KIZZIA
Daily News reporter

He looked like just another "snowbird" from the Lower 48. He'd fish for a few days, learning from other campers how to smoke and can his salmon. Then he'd move the pickup truck and trailer to another campground on the Kenai Peninsula.

Everywhere he camped this summer, from Ninilchik to the Russian River, the man with Montana plates found tourists smoking and canning fish to sell when they got back home, according to investigators with the Alaska State Troopers' Fish and Wildlife Protection division.

The man from Montana was an undercover agent.

"Every campground he was in, there were people commercializing the salmon, even showing other people how to do it," said Fish and Wildlife Protection Sgt. Jim Cockrell.

Fish and Wildlife Protection officials said they sent the agent out in a trailer this year not to bust violators, but to check out widespread reports they'd been hearing of illegal salmon sales in the Lower 48 and in Europe, especially Germany.

"We wanted to see if it was a real problem," said Cockrell. "I think we verified everything we were being told."

In late August, troopers busted three "mom-and-pop" operations in Kenai River campgrounds, seizing about 400 pounds of frozen or canned salmon. But troopers say the problem of selling sport-caught fish appears much larger — and in most cases, there's little the state

FISH: Undercover investigation finds tourists are smoking and selling salmon

can do about it.

The three busted operations all sold fish to an undercover agent in Alaska, according to the state. Three people have pled no contest and paid \$1,500 fines, while two others say they're not guilty and want a trial.

But the long arm of Alaska law does not reach to Arizona or Florida, where the tourists reportedly planned to sell most of their salmon. Had the tourists waited until they left Alaska, they couldn't have been charged by the state with selling sport-caught fish.

Troopers say they need to determine how widespread the practice is before proposing legal solutions. Among the possibilities: appeal to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for help in chasing violators across state lines, or pass a law limiting how many fish a non-resident angler can keep.

"We could lower the possession or processed-possession limits," said Mitch Doerr, an investigator with Fish and Wildlife Protection's commercial crimes bureau. "But that becomes a political deal. Are you going to start losing tourism?"

"I don't know if the problem is great enough to warrant limits on out-of-state fish," said Ben Ellis, executive director of the Kenai River Sportfishing Association. "I'd prefer to see them deal with it with sting operations like this one. How many fish are we talking about? A few hundred or 10,000?"

Anglers have caught an average of 170,000 red salmon each year for the past decade along the Kenai River.

This year, with a big run and the daily bag limit raised from three fish to six, canners and smokers were busy.

Much of the activity is legitimate, troopers say. Beyond the daily take, there's no limit to how many fish a non-resident angler can take home to eat or give away.

The commercial canning operations broken up in August had processed fairly small volumes of fish.

"For the most part, the person isn't trying to get rich off it, but they're trying to pay for their vacation to Alaska," Cockrell said.

Melvin and Barbara Gibb were canning fish in jars in their motor home parked all summer at River Quest campground outside Soldotna. Troopers said they targeted the Gibbs because a retired trooper stumbled on them in Arizona last winter selling canned Alaska salmon at a flea market.

Doerr said the Gibbs had 200 to 300 pounds of frozen salmon when troopers seized their equipment Aug. 23, along with 12 cases of canned fish. He said they expected to receive \$4 a pint for the salmon.

"They were real nice retired people," said Sean Cude, manager of the River Quest campground, who said he was surprised by the bust.

Anchorage
Daily
News
9/11/96

"They probably had about enough fish to make money for gas in their big chug-a-lug motor home," said Cude.

"But it's against the law and they're stealing fish from you and me and our kids. If everybody does it, we're going to be like Oregon and Washington, with all our rivers fished out."

Barbara Gibb, reached on her mobile phone in Soldotna earlier this week, refused to answer questions about selling fish in the Lower 48. She admitted she and her husband sold several silver salmon to the man from Montana, however.

"The man begged us," she said. "He said he was heading back to Montana but he hadn't caught any silvers yet. He came knocking on our door."

Also fined was Richard Willet, a Florida man who troopers said had sold smoked fish from Alaska in the past and planned to expand his market. Willet told the undercover agent he expected to leave with 800 pounds of vacuum-sealed salmon, which he could sell for \$10 a pound. But he only had 100 pounds of salmon when the bust occurred, said Doerr.

Willet sold a 35-pound king salmon and two smoked fillets to the undercover agent at River Quest, Doerr said.

Robert and Edith Miller, who camped at Riverbend Campground, were charged with selling halibut from their son's sportfishing charter. They have pleaded not guilty. Charges against their son, Robert J. Miller, are pending, troopers said.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 7(RLS)

Revision Date: 2/27/97
 Title: Hunting, Sport Fish, Trapping Fees/Licenses
 Sponsor: Senator Donley
 Requester: Senate Rules

Dept. Affected: Fish and Game
 BRU: Wildlife Conservation
 Component: Wildlife Conservation
 COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 473

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 98	FY 99	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES	0.0.	0.0.	0.0	0.0.	0.0	0.0
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (1024)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)
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FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other -- F&G Fund (1024)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)
TOTAL	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)	(31.5)

Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: \$ 0.0

POSITIONS

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Assumptions: (1) total sales of resident licenses will remain constant; (2) inflation will not increase in the future; (3) approximately 5% of these revenue losses would be borne by license vendors.

Estimated losses are "real" losses based on the decreased cost of licenses. The possibility exists that some losses could be offset by savings in vendor payments. The "savings" are estimated in the following scenario: all persons who purchase individual trapping licenses would purchase combination hunt/trap licenses; all persons who purchase hunting licenses would purchase hunt/fish licenses; all persons who purchase hunt/trap licenses would purchase hunt/trap/fish licenses. Under this scenario, savings in vendor payments of \$30.5 would be offset by fee reductions of \$31.5 in current combination licenses sold plus fee reductions (over individual licenses sold) of \$19.6 for increased sales of combination licenses for a net annual loss to the Fish and Game Fund of \$20.6.

Prepared by: Phil Koehl, Wildlife Biologist *PK*
 Division: Wildlife Conservation
 Approved by Commissioner: Deon Buene *Deon Buene*
 Agency: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Phone: 465-4190
 Date: 2/27/97
 Date: 2/27/97

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ADN 9/11/96

Illegal fishing

They broke the law; law broke them

Alaska welcomes visitors with open arms, but there are some guests Alaskans would prefer never to see again. Recently, officers of the Fish and Wildlife Protection Division fingered a bunch of them — folks, some in league with their Alaska hosts, who had been canning and freezing sportfish they caught on the Kenai Peninsula and selling it Outside to finance their summer vacations.

This kind of illegal salmon fishing apparently can be found in just about every campground on the Kenai Peninsula. It's so prevalent, in fact, that Sgt. Bruce Lester of fish and wildlife protection says, "We have a second, unregulated commercial fishery going on down here."

Make no mistake: The violators knew exactly what they were doing. Several of them showed an undercover officer how to put together a salmon-canning operation — and reminded him to keep mum about canning sports fish because it is illegal.

People who abuse Alaska's fish in this fashion don't fit our everyday image of criminals. They're typically middle-class folks who would stand out in a police lineup. But they are bandits nonetheless. They stole fish that didn't belong to them — and their thievery was as real and as destructive as true nasty guys' behavior. That's why the sale of sport-caught fish is a misdemeanor that can lead violators to a year in jail and a fine of up to \$5,000.

A successful fisherman needs a mixture of talent, patience, timing and the right equipment. And once successful, a fisherman needs a conscience. The law simply cannot be on every bank of every stream enforcing honorable behavior.

These folks did not have a conscience, and now they're going to pay for it. Perhaps their example will awaken the conscience of other abusers; if it doesn't, Alaska's fish and wildlife protection officers will have to show them just how harsh the law can be.

8/21/96 ADN

Vacationers' fish seized

Undercover officers say salmon financed trips

The Associated Press

KENAI — Law enforcement officers have confiscated six freezers of fish and 30 cases of canned salmon as part of a undercover investigation of illegal fish-selling operations.

Officers of the Fish and Wildlife Protection Division have long suspected that some retirees and other Alaska visitors have been canning and freezing sport-caught fish on the Kenai Peninsula to help pay for their vacations. Now Fish and Wildlife Protection troopers are cracking down.

"One of our goals was to show that we have a second, unregulated commercial fishery going on down here," said Sgt. Bruce Lester of the Fish and Wildlife Protection Division's commercial crimes division.

An investigation this summer led to the seizure of the freezers and cases of canned salmon, according to Sgt. James Cockrell of the Fish and Wildlife Protection Division in Soldotna.

Lester said most, if not all, of the fish seized were caught by sportfishing methods, though limits may have been exceeded. It doesn't take a ge-

nus to catch a limit, change clothes and catch another limit, Lester said.

"One individual stated that just the fish his wife caught paid for the trip," Lester said.

Cockrell said three separate groups were targeted in the recent seizures. Charges have not yet been filed, so he would not reveal their identities.

The three groups of suspects, from Washington, Oregon and Alaska, are all retired and travel extensively, Lester said. The couple claiming Alaska residency have a son who lives on the Kenai Peninsula.

That son, Lester said, also will be charged with running an unlicensed charter operation and growing marijuana.

Sale of sport-caught fish is a misdemeanor. Violators can be sentenced to a year in jail and fined up to \$5,000.

"I think this is pretty prevalent, based on the information we're getting from the Lower 48," Cockrell said. "Once the reds hit the (Kenai) river, they fish them solid. They all plan on showing up here around the 10th of July."

STING: Sales of sportfish targeted

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This year the operations were so blatant, fish were being sold in the campgrounds right on the Kenai Peninsula, Cockrell said.

"Some of those operations have really sophisticated gear and they work long,

hard hours. Those canners and smokers are going all night," Lester said.

"One operator even had a commercial outlet to sell his fish down south," he said.

An undercover officer was stationed in a peninsula campground this summer after a retired officer bought

some canned Alaska salmon at a flea market in Arizona, Lester said.

Veteran violators return year after year, Cockrell said.

"They teach the new people — give them tips on how to pay for their trips to Alaska," he said.