

SB

7



SENATOR DAVE DONLEY

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SPONSOR STATEMENT - SB 7

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 to pay for their Alaska summer vacation. SB 7 raises non-resident sport fishing license and tag fees to levels more consistent with similar fees in other states and creates a tool for enforcement officers to more easily trace those non-residents who abuse our sport fish resources.

Specifically, SB 7 creates a non-resident seven day king salmon license for \$40, and increases non-resident 3 and 14 day sport fishing license fees to \$20 and \$60, respectively. The bill creates a seven day nonresident anadromous king salmon tag for \$40 and increases the respective three and 14 day tag fees to \$20 and \$60.

SB 7 repeals the \$50 non-resident annual sport fish license, and thereby repeals the annual combination annual sport fish/sport hunt license. By repealing the annual non-resident sport fish licenses, the Department of Fish & Game will have a tool to help identify non-residents who abuse Alaska's sport fish resources throughout the fishing season. The Department will be able to more easily trace non-residents who continually purchase 14 day licenses.

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 hunting and trapping, hunting and sport fishing, and hunting, trapping and sport fishing licenses by \$5, creating an incentive for residents to purchase combination licenses. Purchasing combination licenses will save the State approximately \$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 1/24/97

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



SENATOR DAVE DONLEY
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

**Non-Resident Abuse of Alaska's Sport Fish
Resources Escalating**

by Senator Dave Donley

The misuse of Alaska's sport fish resources by non-residents who harvest, process and sell sport caught fish for profit is escalating. I have introduced Senate Bill 7 to help Fish & Wildlife Protection officers stop non resident abusers and more equitably assess non-residents for use of Alaska's sport fish resources.

Senate Bill 7 raises some non-resident sport fishing license and tag fees to levels more consistent with similar fees in other states. Non-resident 3 and 14 day sport fishing license fees are increased to \$20 and \$60, respectively and a non-resident seven day sport fishing license is created which costs \$40.

Senate Bill 7 also creates a tool for Fish & Wildlife Protection officers to more easily trace those non-residents who abuse our sport fish resources. By repealing the \$50 non-resident annual sport fish license, the longest available sport fishing license for purchase by a non-resident would be a 14 day license. Non-resident abusers will be forced to continually purchase 14 day licenses throughout the season, thereby creating a valuable tracking system for enforcement officers.

In addition, SB 7 creates an incentive for residents to purchase combination hunting and trapping, hunting and sport fishing, and hunting, trapping and sport fishing licenses by reducing these license fees by \$5. Currently, the cost for combination licenses for residents are exactly the same, whether each license is purchased individually, or as a combination. Purchasing combination licenses saves the State approximately \$2 in vendor fees per license, thereby offsetting any loss of revenue, and will result in less paperwork for the Department to process.

State Fish & Wildlife Protection officers who enforce the law believe this problem, although not widespread, is serious and is escalating. Senate Bill 7 creates a mechanism for enforcement officers to more easily trace those non-residents who harvest, process and sell sport caught fish from Alaska and sets more appropriate durations and rates for non-resident sport license fees.

DD/kb

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

**SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT
First Committee of Referral**

DATE: 1/13/97

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: 1/23/97
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 2/6/97

Resources Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 7

Reducing certain resident sport fishing, hunting, and trapping license fees, increasing certain nonresident sport fishing license and tag fees, and relating to nonresident sport fishing, hunting, and trapping licenses; efd.

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS SB 7 (RES)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to the _____ Committee

- Senate Bill:**
 same title
 new title
House Bill:
 same title
 technical title
 new: SCR# _____

SIGNING DQ PASS	DP	OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS	NR	DNP	AM
<i>Luke Green</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Loren A. Hume</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
<i>Bob M. King</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>George Smith</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
CHAIR: <i>Rick Halford</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CHAIR:			

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal
<i>F&G WILDLIFE</i>	<i>2/6</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>F&G SPORTFISH</i>	<i>2/5</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<i>PUBLIC SAFETY</i>	<i>1/29</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):*

Department	Date	Zero	Fiscal

*SB
& CS*

APPROPRIATION -- no fiscal note

*include fiscal notes accompanying Governor's bill



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

BILL ANALYSIS

DEPARTMENT Fish and Game	DIVISION Sport Fish	BILL NUMBER SB7	SPONSOR Donley
SHORT TITLE OF BILL Hunting Sport Fish Trapping Fees/Licenses			
DEPARTMENT POSITION Opposed As Written			
PREPARED BY Kevin Delaney	DATE 1/24/97	COMMISSIONER'S SIGNATURE	DATE

SUMMARY

OTHER AGENCIES AFFECTED BY BILL None	CONSTITUENT GROUP(S) AFFECTED BY BILL Sport Fish Lodge and Guiding Industry Tourism Industry
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR BILL None	ORGANIZATIONAL OPPOSITION TO BILL Sport Fish Lodge and Guiding Industry Tourism Industry Isaac Walton Group
FISCAL IMPACT: <input type="checkbox"/> NONE <input type="checkbox"/> FISCAL NOTE ATTACHED	

BACKGROUND/LEGISLATIVE INTENT
The fee structure for licensing sport fishermen in Alaska has a history of stability with the last significant adjustment occurring in 1992. License sales, particularly to non-residents have increased steadily over the past decade. Money received from sport fishing license sales is deposited in the Fish and Game Fund; a constitutionally dedicated fund which can only be expended for projects that provide benefits primarily to sport fishermen. This bill seeks to lower resident combination license fees, raise non-resident sport fishing license and king salmon tag fees, do away with the annual non-resident sport fishing license, and add both a seven day non-resident sport fish license and king salmon tag.

ANALYSIS OF BILL/PROGRAM EFFECTS
Adoption of SB7 as written, would result in a larger annual contribution to the Fish and Game Fund due to the increases in the 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 the attached fiscal note is not high. Our ability to project market reaction to substantial changes in license fees is limited. At the present time there is no compelling need to lower resident fees or to raise non-resident sport fishing license fees as suggested in this bill. Non-resident fees now comprise approximately 75% of the total annual income from license sales while non-resident sport fishing effort is only 35% of the total effort expended. Increases in participation in Alaska's sport fisheries has been accompanied by increased license sales. The net result has been that Sport Fish Division has been able to roughly keep pace with the increased work load required to properly manage the resource.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED
Senate Bill 7 could be the vehicle to make a number of minor yet significant improvements in the sport fish license structure. The addition of a 7-day license for non-residents appears to have merit. Many visitors to the state book trips to remote lodges for periods of four to seven days. A 7-day license would more readily meet their needs than the current options. Rather than eliminate the annual non-resident license, there is merit to adjusting the price of this license upward so that non-residents who chose to spend an extended period of time in Alaska would make a larger contribution to management of our fisheries resources. Pricing the annual non-resident license at \$75 which is 2.5 times the current cost of a 14-day license would accomplish this objective. This would also address other areas of concern such as: 1) New arrivals to the state who intend to become permanent residents would not be obligated to buy multiple short-term licenses; 2) Summer workers in the commercial fishing and tourism industries would not be discouraged from participating in the sport fishery by high non-resident fees; 3) An annual license for non-residents would remove the need for the provision in Section 4 to accommodate new residents. The existing price structure for 1 and 3-day non-resident licenses is adequate with the only change being the new 7-day license priced at \$25 and pricing the 14-day license at \$40. Instead of adding a 7-day king salmon tag, the annual tag should apply to each of the 7/14/annual non-resident sport fishing licenses.

PLEASE ATTACH A SEPARATE SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR ANALYSIS

Res Family Lic ? - Good Idea

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO: SB 7

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: Public Safety
 Title: An Act relating to the amendment of hunting BRU: Fish and Wildlife Protection
and sport fishing license and tag fees Component: Detachments
 Sponsor: Senator Donley
 Requestor: _____ 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-
CHANGE IN REVENUES ()	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
Revenue Code						

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

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

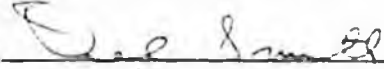
Estimate of current year (FY 97) impact: \$ -0-

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 will impact this department's sport fishing enforcement programs by increasing the time necessary for troopers to determine the length of time nonresidents have been in the state, what their residency intentions are, and if they have the appropriate sport fishing license. However, this Bill is consistent with department objectives if changes are made.

Prepared By: Lt. Joel L. Ford Phone: 269-5409
 Division: Fish and Wildlife Protection Date: January 29, 1997
 Approved by Commissioner:  Date: 1/29/97
 Agency: Ronald L. Otte, Department of Public Safety

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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 7

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: Fish and Game
 Title: Hunting Sport Fish Trapping Fees/Licenses BRU: Sport Fish
 Component: Sport Fish
 Sponsor: Senator Donlev
 Requester: Senate Resources 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)	1,464.7	5,976.1	6,095.7	6,217.6	6,342.0	6,468.8
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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	1,464.7	5,976.1	6,095.7	6,217.6	6,342.0	6,468.8
TOTAL	1,464.7	5,976.1	6,095.7	6,217.6	6,342.0	6,468.8

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 increases in the 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 fees is limited.

See attached page for assumptions.

Prepared by: Kevin Delaney *[Signature]* Phone: 465-4180
 Division: Sport Fish Date: 1/24/97
 Approved by Commissioner: Frank Rue *[Signature]* Date: 1/28/97
 Agency: Fish and Game

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Bill Number: SB 7Title: Hunting Sport Fish Trapping Fees/ Licenses

Assumptions used for license revenue calculations:

- Effective date of bill will be 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 calendar 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 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, 75% will continue to do so, while 25% will now purchase a 7 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 combination, 75% will now purchase a 14 day license and the remaining 25% will purchase a 7 day license.
- Nonresidents who currently purchase an annual king salmon tag will be forced to purchase a series of 14 day or alternate tags. 50% will purchase two 14 day tags, 25% will purchase one 14 day tag, while the remaining 25% will now purchase a 7 day tag.
- Of those nonresidents who currently purchase a 3 day king salmon tag, 75% will continue to do so, while 25% will now purchase a 7 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	130,247	\$1,953.7	130,247	\$1,953.7	\$0.0
Resident Sport Fish & Hunt* (37.5%)	37,456	\$562.0	37,456	\$491.6	(\$70.4)
Resident, SF Hunt & Trap* (27.3%)	5,186	\$77.9	5,186	\$70.8	(\$7.1)
Nonresident Sport Fish	24,334	\$1,216.6	NA	\$0.0	(\$1,216.6)
Nonresident 14 day Sport Fish	87,184	\$2,615.6	105,065	\$6,296.5	\$3,680.9
Nonresident 7 day Sport Fish	NA	\$0.0	37,594	\$1,503.8	\$1,503.8
Nonresident 3 day Sport Fish	63,193	\$947.9	47,395	\$947.9	\$0.0
Nonresident 1 day Sport Fish	68,003	\$680.0	68,003	\$680.0	\$0.0
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	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 KS Stamp	NA	\$0.0	44,603	\$2,676.2	\$2,676.2
Nonresident 7 day KS stamp	NA	\$0.0	16,409	\$656.4	\$656.4
Nonresident 3 day KS stamp	29,952	\$449.3	22,464	\$449.3	\$0.0
Nonresident 1 day KS stamp	35,028	\$350.3	35,028	\$350.3	\$0.0
Duplicate KS Stamp	1,168	\$5.8	1,168	\$5.8	\$0.0
TOTALS		\$10,358.2		\$16,217.2	\$5,859.0

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 7

Revision Date: _____ Dept. Affected: Fish and Game
 Title: Hunting, Sport Fish, Trapping Fees/Licenses BRU: Wildlife Conservation
 Component: Wildlife Conservation
 Sponsor: Senator Donley
 Requester: Resources 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)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)
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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)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)
TOTAL	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)	(140.0)

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

POSITIONS

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill is expected to result in a permanent annual loss of \$140.0 in hunting/trapping revenues to the Fish and Game Fund beginning in FY98.

Assumptions: (1) sales of resident combination 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.

At its current price of \$40, today's hunting/trapping license costs less (in inflation adjusted dollars) than the same license cost at statehood (in 1960). The current resident license fees were last increased in 1992 to help compensate for past increases in inflation. Since then, inflation has again reduced the cost of most resident license fees (already the nation's best bargain) below their 1960 prices.

Prepared by: Phil Koehl, Wildlife Biologist PK
 Division: Wildlife Conservation

Phone: 465-4190
 Date: 1/28/97

Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
 Agency: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Date: 1/28/97

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Mail Stop 3101

130 Seward Street, Suite 409
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2105

MEMORANDUM

February 3, 1997

SUBJECT: Draft CSSB 7 () (Work Order No. 20-LS0131NE)

TO: Senator Dave Donley
Attn: Karen Brand Helms

FROM: George Utermohle *GU*
Legislative Counsel

Enclosed is the draft committee substitute, CSSB 7(), that you requested.

The CS deletes proposed statutory language (page 2, lines 14 - 17 and page 3, lines 9 - 13) that would allow certain nonresidents who have lived in the state for at least six months to obtain six month nonresident sport fishing licenses and nonresident anadromous king salmon tags.

*

In addition to the change that you requested, sec. 5 of the CS contains new language relating to the requirement that nonresident hunters must obtain nonresident big game tags before taking big game. AS 16.05.340(a)(10) currently authorizes the issuance of an annual combined nonresident sport fishing and hunting license. Attached to (a)(10) is the requirement that nonresident hunters obtain big game tags. When SB 7 repeals (a)(10) to eliminate the annual nonresident hunting and sport fishing license, the nonresident big game tag requirement is repealed with it. In order to preserve the nonresident big game tag requirement in SB 7, the requirement was attached to the nonresident hunting license under AS 16.05.340(a)(9). Section 5, SB 7 states:

* Sec. 5. AS 16.05.340(a)(9) is amended to read:

(11) Nonresident hunting license 85

A nonresident may not take a big game animal without previously purchasing a numbered, nontransferable, appropriate tag, issued under (15) of this subsection. The tag must be affixed to the animal immediately upon capture and must remain affixed until the animal is prepared for storage, consumed, or exported. A tag issued but not used for an animal may be used to satisfy the tagging requirement for an animal of any other species for which the tag fee is of equal or less value.

However (a)(9) is not the only provision that authorizes the issuance of hunting licenses to nonresidents. Under AS 16.05.340(a)(11), a nonresident may obtain a combined nonresident hunting and trapping license. In order to assure that all nonresidents must obtain nonresident big game tags regardless of whether the nonresident obtains a nonresident hunting license under (a)(9) or a nonresident hunting and trapping license under (a)(11), the nonresident big game tag requirement should be attached to both provisions.

Another way to achieve the same result (and probably the best way to address this problem) without having to amend both of the nonresident hunting license provisions at (a)(9) and (a)(10) is to insert the big game tag requirement into the big game tag provisions at AS 16.05.340(a)(15). Thus, CSSB 7() contains a new sec. 5 which amends AS 16.05.340(a)(15) to provide that a nonresident hunter may not take big game without first obtaining a big game tag. Section 5, CSSB 7() reads:

* Sec. 5. AS 16.05.340(a)(15) is amended to read:

(15) Nonresident big game tags

A nonresident may not take a big game animal without previously purchasing a numbered, nontransferable, appropriate tag, issued under this paragraph. The tag must be affixed to the animal immediately upon capture and must remain affixed until the animal is prepared for storage, consumed, or exported. A tag issued but not used for an animal may be used to satisfy the tagging requirement for an animal of any other species for which the tag fee is of equal or less value.

(A) Bear, black, each	225
(B) Bear, brown or grizzly, each	500
(C) Bison, each	450
(D) Caribou, each	325
(E) Deer, each	150
(F) Elk, each	300
(G) Goat, each	300
(H) Moose, each	400
(I) Sheep, each	425
(J) Wolf, each	175
(K) Wolverine, each	175
(L) Musk oxen, each	1,100

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

GU:jdr

97-068.jdr



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

9/12/96
ADN

Good folks, bad deeds

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.

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 the 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
9/11/90

"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 mariner 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.

FISH: Undercover investigation finds tourists are smoking and selling salmon

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 1,000 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

can do about it.

The three busted operations all sold fish to the 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.

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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.

8/28/96 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

Continued from Page B-1

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.