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STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
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February 1, 2000

The Honorable Brian Porter
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

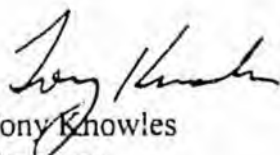
Dear Speaker Porter:

I signed into law in 1997 a bill allowing fishermen to establish regional dive fishery associations with the ability to assess themselves to support management and development of their fisheries. By 1999, one association had organized and begun paying its self-assessed tax to the state. This bill I transmit today fulfills the bargain made with dive fishermen in the 1997 law --that the state ensure the association's self-assessments are used to support the dive fisheries.

This bill requires dive fishery assessments be accounted for separately and classified as non-general fund revenues. The assessment is levied on the value of fishery resources taken by dive gear within specified areas. Current law states the assessment receipts may be appropriated to the Department of Fish and Game and qualified development associations to fund research, stock assessment and management activities. By accounting for these funds separately and allowing them to be appropriated back to the program, the state will honor the commitment made by the dive fishermen who voted to tax themselves to pay for more research and management in their fishery.

This is an excellent example of the fishing industry being willing to contribute to paying the cost of commercial fisheries management and research and worthy of your support.

Sincerely,


Tony Knowles
Governor