



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: PO Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Physical Address: 410 Calhoun Ave Ste 101, Juneau AK 99801

Phone: (907) 586-2820 **Fax:** (907) 463-2545

Email: ufa@ufafish.org **Website:** www.ufafish.org

March 14, 2017

Senate President Pete Kelly
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 111
Juneau, Alaska 99801

House Speaker Bryce Edgmon
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 208
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Title 16 Fisheries Habitat Protections

Dear Senate President Kelly and House Speaker Edgmon,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is a statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 34 commercial fishing organizations and over 400 individuals participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore federal waters. Sixteen of our 34 member organizations represent salmon fisheries that are dependent on Alaska's freshwater and near-shore fish habitat.

UFA supports Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) recommendations for improved public notice and clarification of standards Alaska's Fish Habitat Permitting law as specified in Alaska Statutes Title 16, the Fish and Game Code. Since it is in the interest of commercial fishermen to have statutes and permitting processes that are clear and unambiguous with regard to protection of salmon habitat, UFA agrees with the BOF that, "additional guidance is warranted for the protection of fish, to set clear expectations for permit applicants and to reduce uncertainty in predevelopment planning costs". Given that habitat permitting statutes have not been revised since statehood, we support the recommendation that the Legislature create enforceable standards in statute to protect fish habitat by drawing on the concepts set forth in the portion of the sustainable salmon policy that expressly addresses habitat (5 AAC 39.222(c)(1)(A-F))."

UFA looks forward to working with your body as well as other state decision makers in addressing public notice on fish habitat permits, definitional changes, clarifications and amendments to Title 16 regarding issues related to protection of the state's fish habitat.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator