



FISH HABITAT INITIATIVE

"An Act providing for the protection of wild salmon and fish and wildlife habitat"



ALASKA'S CURRENT LAW DOESN'T CUT IT.

Projects such as a mine, road, or dam proposed to be constructed in salmon habitat require a fish habitat permit from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). The problem is, when issuing the permit, ADF&G has no standard for issuing permits, public notice is not required, and there is little opportunity for public involvement. Because of this, it is very difficult for the ADF&G to deny a Fish Habitat Permit for even the most risky projects. For instance, under current law it is highly likely the Agency would issue a permit for the proposed Pebble mine.

SOLUTION: UPDATE AN OLD LAW

The threats to Alaska wild salmon today, such as the size and scale of the proposed Pebble mine, were unimaginable at the time the state's fish habitat permit laws were drafted over 50 years ago. Today, we have intact runs of wild salmon in Alaska, unlike the Lower 48, simply because we have not had time to mess them up. Now, we are at a critical juncture in Alaska's wild salmon future.

Alaskans will vote in November on whether to update Alaska's existing fish habitat permit law to provide new, clear, science-based guidelines for safely developing projects in salmon habitat. Among other minor changes, the initiative would make four significant updates to our law:

1. DIFFERENTIATES BETWEEN PROJECTS WITH "MAJOR" AND "MINOR" IMPACTS

The initiative would streamline permits for projects with insignificant impacts to fish habitat, while increasing scrutiny for "major" projects such as Pebble that could cause a great deal of harm. It also allows ADF&G to authorize blanket, 'general permits' by region for activities with little to no impacts (e.g. ATV use, trails, docks)



Eric Booton

2. INVOLVES ALASKANS IN THE PROCESS

Adds public notice and comment periods before ADF&G issues a fish habitat permit that would fall into the "major" category.

3. INCREASES CERTAINTY IN THE PERMIT PROCESS

Ensures ADF&G considers public input and scientific criteria for healthy salmon habitat, like water quality and quantity and access to spawning habitat, when evaluating project proposal. This provides certainty for a developer by setting clear expectations, while also safeguarding fish habitat.



Cooper Landing Fishing Guide

4. CUTS DOWN ON USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS

The initiative decreases costs associated with anadromous fish habitat catalog nominations, and requires project developers, not the state, to pay for the costs associated with gathering their fish habitat permits.

A·NAD·RO·MOUS

- ə'nadrəməs
adjective - ZOOLOGY
(of a fish, such as the salmon) migrating up rivers from the sea to spawn. e.g. salmon, Dolly Varden, steelhead.



ANGLERS VOTE YES ON MEASURE 1



Fly Out Media



Pat Clayton

WHY IS TU GETTING INVOLVED?

The mission of Trout Unlimited is to conserve, protect, and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. We have long recognized that Alaska needs both salmon and development of our state's natural resources. But in order to sustain our salmon, we need to ensure that development is done responsibly. That is why we have worked for years to protect Bristol Bay from the proposed Pebble mine. If passed, the initiative would set a high bar for projects threaten important salmon habitat, like Pebble mine, while at the same time allowing for other developments to advance as long as they protect our fisheries. The initiative puts Alaskans in the driver's seat on defining what it means to develop responsibly in salmon habitat. Better salmon habitat laws are good for fish, good for business, good for fishing, and good for Alaska.

-Nelli Williams, Alaska director, (907) 230-7121 | nwilliams@tu.org

COMMON QUESTIONS

Will this shut down all development, and how would permits get denied?

No. First, if the project does not "use, divert, obstruct, pollute, disturb, or otherwise alter anadromous fish habitat" then a permit is not needed. The initiative even explicitly exempts certain activities and provides general permits for projects with insignificant impacts. The initiative doesn't outright prohibit any future development projects. Rather, it establishes a system where Alaskans have a say in how our salmon habitat is managed and where ADF&G can make rational, science-based permitting decisions.

Don't we already have a rigorous enough permitting process?

Currently, there are NO specific rules on what is or is not allowed in salmon habitat. When pressure on our state's natural resources was minimal, our laws were sufficient. Today, we need better-defined safeguards for our wild salmon to match the increasing pressure placed on our fish and water resources. While our state founders were deliberate and visionary, we need to make sure the protections they put in our state constitution have full effect and that projects like Pebble don't get a free pass.

Who is behind this initiative?

Creating strong safeguards for salmon habitat was born out of Alaskans' concerns about increasing threats to wild salmon, notably the proposed Pebble mine, and recent declining runs. In 2016, the Board of Fisheries submitted a request to the Legislature to update the law. When the legislative process failed, over 49,000 Alaskans signed a petition to ensure this issue made the Nov. 2018 ballot. The initiative is supported by hundreds of Alaska-based businesses, many Alaska Native Tribes, commercial fishermen, and sportsmen and women. More than 500 Alaskans have donated to the Yes for Salmon campaign. Large, multi-national companies involved in mining and oil and gas development in Alaska are investing millions of dollars to oppose the ballot measure.



"As a former Deputy Director of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Habitat Division, I know all too well how inadequate our state's fish habitat protection requirements are and how much they need to be strengthened. The burden of proof needs to be shifted to those proposing natural resource development projects to demonstrate that salmon and other fish habitat will not be degraded by such activities."

- Bruce Baker, Juneau

For information on "major" vs. "minor" track, see: <http://bit.ly/Prop1CitizenGuide> This page will help you determine what category a permit might fall into.

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