**[Your Name/Organization]**

[Street Address/PO Box]

[City], AK [Zip]

[Month Day, Year]

**The Honorable [Full Name]**

State Senate

Alaska State Capitol

120 4th Street Rm 3

Juneau, AK 99801-1182

**RE: Support for House Bill 125–Balancing Representation on the Alaska Board of Fisheries**

Dear Senator [Last Name],

For thousands of years, Alaska Native peoples—from the Arctic to Southeast, from the Interior to the Aleutians—have relied on and stewarded the traditional harvest of fish, wildlife, and marine resources. A love for the land and our shared resources is the foundation of our cultures, economies, and ways of life. Boards and commissions tasked with managing these resources must include representation that unites and reflects those who have depended on and lived in relation with them since time immemorial.

The very reason Alaska once sustained abundant fisheries and healthy ecosystems is due to the stewardship of Indigenous peoples. For over 10,000 years, our Ancestors practiced Indigenous science, protecting spawning grounds, observing life cycles, and ensuring balance among all species, all while teaching the values of respect and reciprocity that underpin sustainability. Since statehood, however, the intentional exclusion of tribal voices in Western management systems has led to declines in fish stocks, erosion of the use of traditional knowledge in decision-making, and diminished food security for our communities. A necessary step forward is the recognition that Indigenous knowledge is living, practiced daily, and will be a vital component in restoring balance and sustainability in Alaska's resource management today.

Across Alaska, Tribes and tribal entities bring deep ecological understanding and a long-term vision for stewardship. Yet for too long, the voices of those who live closest to and depend most on the health of our fish and wildlife—particularly subsistence users, many of whom are or were commercial permit holders—have been diminished in state management decisions. Incorporating an expert in Indigenous science and traditional ecological knowledge into governance is not only a matter of respect but also of effectiveness; modern management systems are strengthened when they reflect the lived experiences and stewardship practices of Alaska’s rural and Tribal communities. This inclusion is crucial for sustaining food security, cultural continuity, and local economies throughout the state.

**House Bill 125 (HB 125) provides a clear path forward to correcting this imbalance by establishing two designated seats for each user group, including commercial, sport, and subsistence, on the Alaska Board of Fisheries. It also designates an additional seat for a fisheries scientist, ideally trained in both Western and Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies.**

This is a crucial and necessary step toward ensuring that state management decisions are balanced, informed, and reflective of the people and communities most significantly impacted by them.

In 2022, the State of Alaska formally recognized Alaska’s 229 federally recognized Tribes as sovereign governments and essential partners in shaping Alaska’s future, affirming what we have always known: Alaska’s strength lies in partnership with the first peoples of this land. Supporting HB 125 is an opportunity to honor that recognition by ensuring tribal voices are represented in decision-making.

**We respectfully urge the Alaska Legislature to support HB 125 and any similar efforts that advance greater inclusion of Tribal representation across Alaska’s decision-making bodies.** We look forward to working in partnership to build a future where Indigenous knowledge and leadership are recognized as essential to the stewardship of our shared resources and those that define our great state.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

[Name]
[Title, if applicable]

*[DELETE BELOW BEFORE SENDING]*

**WHERE TO SEND THIS LETTER**

Since the bill has already passed the House, please direct your support to our Senators. To find who your Senator is, go to [akleg.gov](http://akleg.gov), scroll to the bottom, and enter your address (or just your village) in the box “WHO REPRESENTS ME?”

Click on your senator, and there you will find their e-mail address. Send this letter to your Senator, and CC Representative Jimmie, who sponsored this bill. Her e-mail address is Representative.Nellie.Jimmie@akleg.gov.

**TO TRACK THIS BILL**

By Email: Visit the [Bill Tracking Management Facility (BTMF)](https://www.akleg.gov/basis/btmf_login.asp?session=34), and create an account. From there, create a folder and add bills you would like to be notified of. Make sure the box to receive email notifications is checked on each bill that you add.

By Text: Text a bill number (e.g. HB125) to 559-245-2529 to enroll in text alerts. You will receive an enrollment confirmation and instructions on how to stop receiving the alerts.

You can also contact your local [Legislative Information Office (LIO)](https://akleg.gov/lios.php). Some offices contact interested persons when a bill they are following is scheduled for public testimony. Legislative Information staff can also assist you in understanding the legislative process.