

# Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Brent Hibbert, Assembly President  
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

**FROM:** Lane Chesley, Assembly Member *LC*

**DATE:** February 18, 2021

**RE:** Resolution 2021-017, Supporting Regional Aquaculture Associations and Opposing Proposed Changes to the Management Plan of Kachemak Bay State Park and State Wilderness Park that would Negatively Impact Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (Chesley)

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Kachemak Bay State Park is in the process of rewriting its Management Plan. The Park was created in 1970 and Tutka Bay Lagoon Hatchery (TBLH) was built in 1975-76. The State of Alaska (State) was the creator of both entities and the State managed both until 1991 when the State was abandoning all salmon hatcheries that contributed to commercial fisheries. The abandonment has been completed, long ago. At this time there is not a single State operated hatchery in Alaska with a salmon enhancement program intended to benefit a commercial fishery. Instead, the State supports Regional Aquaculture Associations and also a few private, non-profit (mom & pop) hatcheries.

Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association (CIAA) took over operation of TBLH in 1991, at about the same time it took over operation of two other State-owned hatcheries. Also, at about the same time, farm-raised salmon hammered the price of Alaska salmon. By 2004 the price of the pinks cost recovered at TBLH fell to 4¢/lb.! So CIAA discontinued operation of TBLH.

By 2011, however, the fate and popularity of pink salmon in the marketplace soared. Pink salmon were selling for 37¢/lb. and CIAA reopened TBLH. Alaska Department of Fish and Game encouraged the move and the State loaned CIAA money to accomplish needed renovations. The State also funded grants for state-owned hatcheries, including TBLH after 2011. About 2017 CIAA was able to adapt

TBLH to a fresh water egg-take (gamete collection) increasing the survival rate of eggs. The sky seemed blue and years of struggle were freshened with hope.

And now news comes that TBLH is no longer welcome in the Kachemak Bay State Park. A hatchery doesn't fit the view shed of a "scenic" park according to a document from State Parks and comments from others. Actually, TBLH cannot be seen from Tutka Bay. Other people claim hatchery pink salmon are negatively impacting ecosystems that other marine animals and other salmon depend on. To that end we can discuss various studies and scientific data, which contradict this theory. That is the issue before the Assembly today.

Your consideration is appreciated.