



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yes for Salmon certified for the 2018 ballot

Sweeping support in every legislative district qualifies salmon habitat protection initiative

ANCHORAGE – The Division of Elections certified the Yes for Salmon Initiative for a 2018 ballot today, clearing the way for citizens to vote on an issue that has garnered widespread support from a diverse group of Alaskans statewide. Nearly 42,000 signatures were verified from all 40 legislative districts, the first time in at least 15 years that a ballot initiative has surpassed the minimum signatures required in every district. The initiative would update an ineffective state law governing development in salmon habitat. It's now slated for a vote later this year.

“Alaskans have spoken and the message is clear: salmon is our way of life, a cornerstone of our culture and economy. Economic development is necessary, but protecting salmon habitat is too,” said Stephanie Quinn-Davidson, Yes for Salmon ballot sponsor and director of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. “We understand what it’s like to experience serious declines in salmon runs – we’ve seen it in king runs statewide - and that’s for reasons that are out of our control. Promoting responsible development is something we can control and is the most important proactive step we can take to keep our runs strong. And now we officially have the chance to vote on this critical issue.”

“The people have spoken -- they want every Alaskan to vote on this issue,” said Ryan Schryver, campaign director for Stand for Salmon, one of the organizations working to update this particular law. “Leaders across the state can now see how important this issue is to all Alaskans.”

The ballot initiative updates Alaska’s aging permitting laws around salmon habitat, strengthening protections for Alaska’s salmon through clear, science-based development guidelines that would bring accountability and public input to large development projects.

“This initiative was specifically designed to ensure that vital rural infrastructure projects – roads, airports, pipelines and sewer and water facilities can move forward, while our salmon runs and salmon fishing economy is also protected,” said Mike Wood, Yes for Salmon ballot sponsor and a setnet fisherman in Cook Inlet.

The salmon fishing industry provides jobs for nearly 30,000 Alaskans and generates \$2 billion in economic activity, while the fishing industry in Alaska provides \$722 million dollars in taxes annually that help pay for schools, police, health care and infrastructure.

If the Alaska Legislative session ends on time, the initiative will be bound for the primary election. If the Legislature goes into a special session, the initiative is expected to appear on a ballot in the general election.

Yes for Salmon is a diverse group of Alaska-based individuals, businesses and organizations dedicated to passing a ballot initiative that updates Alaska’s law governing development in salmon habitat. For more information, visit www.yesforsalmon.org.

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Paid for by Yes for Salmon, Anchorage, AK. Michael Wood, Chair, approved this message. The top 3 contributors are John Childs, Vero Beach, FL; The Alaska Center, Anchorage, AK; and Alaska Conservation Foundation, Anchorage, AK.