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Senate Bill 232

- by request -

"An Act relating to personal use fishing permits."

Senate Bill 232 is aimed at addressing impacts faced by Cook Inlet communities where dipnet fisheries are prosecuted, such as additional burdens on local services, infrastructure, handling excess fish waste, litter and disregard for local residents and property owners near the fishery. The beaches near the mouths of effected rivers are often treated as trash receptacles with sometimes little regard for the local communities.

As an example, since nearly inception, the dipnet fishery at the mouth of the Kenai River has been a burden on the City of Kenai. It is true that the influx of "dippers" brings welcomed revenue to local businesses. However, prior to the City instituting an access or parking fee, the city was forced to deal with the increased demand on public safety and public works personnel with no outside financial assistance.

SB 232 institutes an insignificant \$5.00 fee for a Cook Inlet personal use fishing permit. Fees collected would be split between communities where personal use fisheries take place with the remainder staying in the General Fund for state-provided services and infrastructure.

Many might ask why a community should receive money when the resource (fish) belongs to all Alaskans. The answer is simple, when any community sees the influx of throngs of people that Kenai, for instance, sees during the short dipnet fishery season, the burden on city services is dramatically increased. This fee would help to offset some of this burden created by the State's dip net fishery while providing opportunities to improve the dip-netting experience.

In areas outside municipal boundaries, these funds could help cover additional costs for infrastructure, boat launches, restrooms, law enforcement and waste management.

I urge your support of this legislation.