

April 9, 2019

Sen. Chris Birch
Chair, Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 125
Juneau, Alaska 99801
VIA E-MAIL

Re: Chignik Intertribal Coalition Letter of Support for the Appointment of Marit Carlson-Van Dort to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

Dear Senator Birch,

The Chignik Intertribal Coalition (the “Coalition”) wishes to express its support for the appointment of Marit Carlson-Van Dort to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The Coalition is comprised of the five federally-recognized tribes in the Chignik area – Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Ivanof Bay, and Perryville. The Coalition works to preserve and advance the economic and social interests of its members.

Subsistence fishing is tremendously important to the Coalition. Our stakeholders who can no longer afford to participate in Chignik’s commercial fishery, or who are unable to participate due to age or physical limitations, depend upon the Chignik subsistence fishery to meet their nutritional needs. As sockeye returns have diminished in recent years and the amount necessary for subsistence has been reduced, our stakeholders recognize how vitally important the Board’s decisions are to the preservation of their customary and traditional ways of life.

Commercial fishing is also an ingrained way of life for the Coalition’s stakeholders. Commercial salmon fishing is the sole economic base of every municipality, most businesses, and the majority of the individuals living and working in the Chignik area. The Chignik commercial sockeye fishery is wedged in between two larger mixed-stock fisheries, the Kodiak Area fisheries to the east and South Alaska Peninsula fisheries to the west. Its location makes Board of Fisheries decisions about how to best manage mixed-stock fisheries crucially important to the Coalition’s stakeholders.

The Board’s critical role in the management of Alaska’s fisheries means that its members should possess the knowledge, experience, and ability necessary to translate complicated information and issues into prudent and effective regulations. The Coalition is confident that Ms. Carlson-Van Dort’s personal and professional experiences will make her an invaluable asset to the Board and the fisheries management process.

Ms. Carlson-Van Dort’s education and professional work in natural resources management and environmental conservation has equipped her with the rare ability to understand the broad environmental effects of fisheries regulations across management areas and ecosystems. As the result of spending over a decade working as a commercial seiner, Ms. Carlson-Van Dort comprehends the intricacies of Alaska’s commercial fisheries, and understands the economic and social impacts fisheries regulations have on commercial fleets.

And, as a devoted public servant who worked for the Alaska Legislature for a number of years, she recognizes and understands the importance of the public process and has expressed her commitment to its fair and efficient administration.

The Coalition is confident that Ms. Carlson-Van Dort's extensive involvement with village and regional ANCSA corporations has equipped her with the requisite experience needed to make informed decisions about shifting burdens between fishery resources and management areas when necessary. As a shareholder of both Bristol Bay Native Corporation and Koniag, Inc., and as the CEO of Far-West, Inc., Ms. Carlson-Van Dort recognizes the economic impacts that natural resource decisions have upon individuals and institutions.

The Coalition also believes that the Board should be an accurate reflection of the Alaskans it represents. Since 1975, less than five women have served on the Board of Fish. Hundreds of women work within Alaska's commercial fishing industry and possess invaluable experience and expertise that should be recognized by the Board and reflected by its membership.

The appointment of Ms. Carlson-Van Dort to the Board of Fisheries is crucially important to the protection of Alaska's fishery resources. The Coalition hopes that you recognize her value and experience, and confirm her nomination to the Board of Fisheries so that she can serve Alaska in this vital role.

Sincerely,



George Anderson
President, Chignik Intertribal Coalition

Cc: Representative Bryce Edgmon, Speaker of the House
Representative John Lincoln, Co-Chair, House Resources Committee
Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair, House Resources Committee
Representative Louise Stutes, Chair, House Fisheries Committee