

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

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February 19, 2017

House Fisheries Committee
Representative Stutes, Chair
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811
Via email: Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov

Re: **OPPOSITION for HB 88** - *"An Act relating to the composition of the Board of Fisheries".*

Dear Representative Stutes and Committee Members:

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters (USAG) opposes HB 88, which proposes to change the composition of the Board of Fisheries from seven to nine members. We believe the stated potential benefits of this proposed bill, *"adding more diversity of interest, greater breadth of knowledge, and more points of view to the Board"* will NOT necessarily be accomplished by increasing membership. While admirable benefits, adding more members will instead take significantly more time, including an estimated 20% more meeting time, and cost about \$85,000 per year. Importantly, adding members does not fix meeting performance issues such as quieting member knowledge with current conflict of interest policies.

We agree with you Representative Stutes that Alaskans tend to expect those making up the Board of Fisheries should fairly represent ranges of geography and user groups. Alaska statute 16.05.221, which guides the Governor's Board of Fish appointments does not address these valid expectations. We are watching HB 87 that would allow Board of Fish members to deliberate on regulatory proposals, in hopes that, if passed, will utilize Members' knowledge and points of view, thus addressing proposed benefits of HB 88.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me with questions.

With respect,



Cynthia Wallesz
Executive Director

The mission of United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters is to protect, serve and enhance the gillnet fleet of southeast Alaska. We represent the interests of 473 salmon gillnet permit holders and their families.