

Alaska State Legislature

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REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CHENAULT HOUSE DISTRICT 29

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HOUSE BILL 149: "An Act relating to meetings of the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game."

House Bill 149 proposes two changes:

1. Changes three-year meeting cycles for management of a specific fishery to five years.
2. Adds Kenai to the Southcentral region as a location to hold Board of Fisheries meetings.

The main reason I'm advocating for a change from the three-year meeting cycle to a five-year meeting cycle is to determine if proposals adopted by the Board of Fisheries are working. A three-year cycle is simply too short of a time period, especially when most salmon runs are on a three to seven year cycle, to determine whether a policy adopted by the board is beneficial to the resource and the many user groups dependent on salmon.

Adopting a five-year cycle should also be a cost savings for the Department of Fish and Game since staff will not have to spend as much time preparing for board meetings as they do under a three-year cycle.

Should emergency situations arise, the board will still be able to meet to address those situations. A meeting can be called by the Commissioner of ADF&G or two or more board members. The board announces its' regularly scheduled meetings but can always call more if deemed necessary.

The reason for the second change is the board has not met on Upper Cook Inlet (UCI) issues in the Kenai-Soldotna area since 1999. These UCI issues have a direct impact on Kenai Peninsula residents as well as the rest of southcentral Alaska. I'm not against holding meetings in Anchorage or the Mat-Su, but I believe the locations should be at least rotated between the three areas on an equal basis. To be fair, there have been work sessions, a listening session and task force meetings in the Kenai-Soldotna area as well as several Lower Cook Inlet meetings in Homer over the last twenty years. However, changing AS 16.05.300(b), to include Kenai in the southcentral area will possibly direct the board to meet in the Kenai area.