

# BRISTOL BAY NATIVE ASSOCIATION

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March 24, 2009

Representative Bryce Edgmon via ~~email~~ fax  
Chair, House Special Committee on Fisheries  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Chairmen Edgmon:

The Bristol Bay Native Association would like to support House Bill 117: Board of Fisheries Meeting Location. The Passage of HB 117 will help ensure that the residents of regional communities have the opportunity to provide face-to-face testimony to the Board of Fish.

Holding the meetings where the topic or proposals being considered at the meeting relates to that region is the right thing to do.

The Bristol Bay fisheries occur here, but the hundreds of millions of dollars of economic benefits generated by the Bristol Bay fisheries merit the meeting being held here at the source. Furthermore, the local permit owners have much higher costs than those living elsewhere making travel to and from our region more expensive and unaffordable. According to a recent study by the University of Alaska's Institute of Social and Economic Research, rural residents pay 40 percent of their income on energy (gas, home heating fuel and electricity) compared to a meager 4 percent for urban residents. This is compounded by very limited job prospects, ailing economic conditions, and a high cost of living in our communities. Bristol Bay village residents will not likely be able to afford the travel and per diem costs to and from Anchorage. Some may have to choose between paying their monthly bills or paying thousands of dollars for airfare, hotels and meals in Anchorage.

As a matter of fairness, the important restructuring issues, including the 32-foot vessel limit and permit stacking, to be considered at the 2009 meeting requires hearing views from as many fishermen as possible. Those decisions will directly affect their livelihoods and will have a very large impact on our local and regional economies. Holding the meeting in Anchorage will limit the voices you hear to only those who can afford the travel and per diem costs, and will most likely be only voices from out-of-region and out-of-State. BBNA fully supports House Bill No. 117.

Sincerely,



Ralph Andersen  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: BBNA Executive Committee  
Paul Marcotte, BOF Executive Director  
Joe Chythlook, Regional Coordinator

Tribal Councils  
Served by BBNA:

Aleknagik

Chignik Bay

Chignik Lagoon

Chignik Lake

Clarks Point

Curyung

Egegik

Ekuk

Ekwok

Igiugig

Iliamna

Ivanof Bay

Kanatak

King Salmon

Kokhanok

Koliganek

Levelock

Manokotak

Naknek

New Stuyahok

Newhalen

Nondalton

Pedro Bay

Perryville

Pilot Point

Port Heiden

Portage Creek

South Naknek

Togiak

Twin Hills

Ugashik