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March 22, 2018

Representative Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 406
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: HB 35 - Conflict of Interest Bill

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) represents over 100 seine permit holders. SEAS' is on record as supporting this legislation in the last legislative cycle, and again is an advocate for this change. We believe allowing Board of Fisheries members to participate in deliberations but abstain from voting when they are considered to have a conflict of interest will add valuable information, history, and knowledge to matters that come before this body. As it stands now, many times the only other people in the room who may have similar knowledge and background that are allowed to speak are ADF&G staff; much of the time they do not participate in these deliberations to avoid the appearance of arguing for any "side" when there may be allocation implications in the outcome.

"Participating in deliberations" would allow a board member to discuss the proposal, to answer questions if asked, to ask questions of staff, to help build the record, and to state their opinion; they would not be allowed to make amendments, substitute motions, vote on amendments, vote on the proposal, or vote on whether a proposal should be brought back for reconsideration.

Thank you for making this issue a priority for this session.

Sincerely,

Susan Doherty
Executive Director