



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 28, 2019

Representative Lincoln, Co-Chair House Resources
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau AK, 99801

Representative Tarr, Co-Chair House Resources
State Capitol Room 1028
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: HB 35 – Conflict of Interest BOF/BOG

Dear Co-Chairs Lincoln and Tarr and Members of the House Resource Committee:

UFA would like to respond to the arguments made by the single group which testified in opposition to HB 35 on Wednesday, March 27 in House Resources. The group stated that HB 35 is not needed due to the fact there are three opportunities in which board members who conflict out of proposals can participate in the process.

The three opportunities they recommended were 1) Writing an on-time public comment, 2) participating in public testimony and 3) participating in Committee of the Whole. Aside from the fact that it is not prudent for a board member to participate during these opportunities, it is not helpful. The tough questions that tend to arise happen during deliberations, which is why this bill seeks to allow board members to participate in deliberations.

It is during deliberations that amendments are made, and new areas of discussion are opened up creating new layers of questions that only someone with expertise in the field may be able to answer. This is the time that board members are currently silenced and this is the time they are most needed.

Public comments, public testimony, and Committee of the Whole are an opportunity to show biases, which no board member should be encouraged to do, especially ones that may have a conflict of interest. Allowing them to participate in deliberations however would allow them to answer questions and bring clarification to complicated issues while on the record.

We continue to encourage and seek transparency in this bill that will benefit all seven members of each board.

Sincerely,

Matt Alward
President

Frances H. Leach
Executive Director