



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

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April 16, 2019

RE: OPPOSITION TO KARL JOHNSTONE'S CONFIRMATION

Dear Representatives and Senators,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) is a multi-fishery/multi-gear commercial fishing association representing our 330+ members involved in salmon, crab, shrimp and longline fisheries.

We normally as many other groups don't oppose a Board of Fish candidate even when we would hope someone else had been nominated and why a lot of opposition wasn't heard in previous confirmation hearings for Karl Johnstone, but in this case we felt we had to speak up. We don't see that opposing his confirmation will put us in any worse of a position than we were at the ending of his previous term of service. He would not talk to us. We listened to the Senate Resource Committee Hearing and participated in the Joint House Resource and Fisheries Committee last night. Many sports fishermen commented that he was very accessible and came out in the audience but our observations were that he would come out in the audience but was very selective in who he talked to and would surround himself with the same group of sport fishermen providing a buffer from others who would wish to try and discuss an issue with him.

When I look back at Karl Johnstone's term of service several instances immediately come to mind showing the wrong traits for an effective board member. First, the sablefish resource in Chatham Strait had a significant declining trend in biomass that ADF&G Comm Fish Division was very concerned about with a growing sport and charter fishery developing with an unknown harvest – the commercial sector asked for accounting of the sport harvest and bag limits to slow the growth so the fishery could be managed appropriately, I was told by Karl Johnstone that as long as there was a commercial fishery there was no conservation concern for the resource. (in this fishery the estimated personal use and sport harvest is taken off the top of the allowable catch and the commercial sector gets the remainder. Karl would cut off ADF&G biologists if he wasn't receiving the answer he wanted. He grilled and embarrassed on the

record a Board of Fish member about a possible conflict of interest. I arranged a time to meet with Karl Johnstone on some issue of importance to our members and Karl's comment was I read your written comments and I don't need to hear this. SEAFA is a multi-gear/multi-species organization and therefore we respond to a lot of proposals and therefore don't always put everything in our testimony expecting an opportunity to have a discussion with a Board member, sometimes there are nuances that are difficult to convey in written comments, sometimes you want the discussion to be sure they understand the nuances. In the Senate Resource's committee hearing Karl Johnstone mentioned one of the opportunities for the public to participate was in the committee of the whole but under his chairmanship the committee of the whole became a place where one person generally the author was allowed to provide any additional NEW testimony and one person in opposition. Since he has been off the board the committee process allows the opportunity for any NEW information as long as it hasn't been presented you get a chance to be heard. During public testimony you have generally five minutes to speak to all the proposals being heard at that meeting.

One particular issue where the process was disturbing was when Karl Johnstone championed a proposal for a lodge owner in Yakutat where he fishes that would have greatly affected the community. An individual at the Board meeting was able to get a member to have the issue reconsidered after he connected him to native and community leaders on a teleconference. In this instance, Karl Johnstone was disrespectful of the local ADF&G Fish and Game Advisory Committee representative and the information provided was completely discounted and ignored on what the effect would be to the community.

We understand that if Karl Johnstone was not confirmed to the Board of Fish that another sports fisherman would likely be appointed in his place but hopefully someone that would bring more balance and diversity (possibly a more coastal community perspective) and actually concern about the resource and it's sustainability to the board and would treat the process and participants with respect and transparency.

Please oppose the confirmation of Karl Johnstone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Hansen" followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kathy Hansen
Executive Director