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Rep. Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
Juneau, AK 99801

3 Sept. 2020

RE : Concern for Abe Williams on the Board of Fisheries

Dear Representative Stutes and Fisheries Committee Members,

As a two-term Board of Fisheries member who failed to win reappointment last spring, I expect some may see my view here as tainted with sour grapes. I want to assure you that's not the case.

For the record, I count myself among the majority of Bristol Bay watershed residents and thousands of Alaskans who strongly oppose the Pebble Mine, and my concern is that Mr. Williams, as you are aware, is on the payroll of the company promoting it.

As legislators you know that Alaska's Constitution requires the Board of Fish to manage fishery resources for sustainability. Unlike the Legislature however, the Board of Fisheries has a strict conflict of interest policy, that prohibits board members from debating proposals in which they or family members have even the appearance of a financial interest.

In addition, committee assignments available to Board of Fish members include participation on the Board's Habitat Committee, the mission of which is self explanatory, and subject to the same conflict of interest policy.

Is it not an upside world to consider seating a board member who for years has been paid to promote the interests of a company that threaten both the sustainability of the world's most productive wild salmon fishery and the habitat that sustains it? Given the Board's Constitutional mandate to protect and preserve Alaska's fishery resources and habitat, Mr. Williams conflict ought to be disqualifying.

As to the other candidates, I support John Jensen's reappointment. Commercial fishermen are fast becoming an endangered species on the Board of Fish, and Mr. Jensen's long history in the industry is an asset to the Board's work.

Thank you, sincerely,

