



April 9, 2021

House Fisheries and Resource Committees

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To Whom It May Concern:

I write on behalf of Cama'i Heritage Learning in support of the re-appointment of Märit Carlson Van Dort to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Ms. Carlson Van Dort's continued commitment and positive action to address policy disparities in coastal communities aligns with our values as an Alaska Native organization seeking to empower rural, Indigenous students in their learning journeys.

As an organization which partners with tribal entities to create and share stories of contextualized, place-based content, we prioritize making spaces for students to explore their own histories, ideas, observations, and identities. Ms. Carlson Van Dort has committed to working with our students, sharing her knowledge, expertise, and background with commercial fishing, Alaska Native Corporations, and personal connections to living in both rural and urban settings. Ms. Carlson Van Dort is a proven and committed public servant who makes an outstanding addition to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Her tireless efforts indicate deep ties to our state and regional responsibilities.

Our framework involves orientating students to new educational context, by grounding learning in the local landscape. This helps students recognize their knowledge and life experiences as highly intelligent, Alaska Native people. Next, we explore concepts of language, to share our existing and newly formed knowledge to deepen understanding and relationships. Finally, we help students apply new understandings to a broader culture to build community.

Historically, math and Alaska history classes have underserved Alaska Native and American Indian students. We believe that by embracing embodied learning, through distance or blended learning courses, students benefit from searching for critical evidence of stories untold from Alaska's Indigenous peoples that shape our collective past, present, and future field of mathematics. Having guests collaborate with our classes strengthens community relations, offers diverse points of views, and brings our students closer to experts, career paths, and positive identity formation.

Ms. Carlson Van Dort's intelligence, perspective, service, and unique life experiences benefit the systems and policies influencing Alaska's current and future fisheries.

Thank you for your consideration of Märit Carlson Van Dort's re-appointment.

Sincerely,

Kate Cruz, Co-Founder
Anya Nelson, Co-Founder
Cama'i Heritage Learning

