

Native Village of False Pass

February 26, 2026

Chair Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support HB 33 – Conflict of Interest: Board of Fisheries / Board of Game

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

We, the undersigned Tribal Presidents representing federally recognized tribes in the Eastern Aleutians region, write in support of HB 33, legislation that would allow members of the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game to participate in deliberations when a conflict of interest has been declared, while continuing to prohibit those members from voting.

Our tribes represent Unanga communities whose identities, subsistence practices, and regional economies remain deeply connected to the fisheries resources of the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Islands. Decisions made by the Board of Fisheries directly affect not only commercial opportunity, but also subsistence harvests, food security, and cultural continuity in our communities.

Board members are appointed because of their knowledge, lived experience, and understanding of Alaska's diverse fisheries and communities. When a member is entirely excluded from deliberations due to a declared conflict, the Board loses valuable regional perspective and firsthand expertise. Allowing participation in discussion, without permitting a vote, strengthens the record, improves transparency, and ensures that decisions are made with a full understanding of on-the-ground impacts.

Participating in deliberations should mean the ability to discuss proposals, ask questions of Department staff, clarify allocative implications, and help build an accurate and complete public record. It should not include the authority to make motions, amend proposals, or vote on final actions. HB 33 strikes that appropriate balance.

For our region, fisheries management is not theoretical. It affects whether our communities remain viable, whether our families are able to maintain subsistence harvests, and whether our local economies can continue to support essential services. Ensuring that all relevant expertise remains at the deliberative table, while maintaining clear voting safeguards, will lead to more informed and equitable management decisions.

We respectfully urge the Legislature to pass HB 33 to improve transparency, fairness, and effectiveness in Board of Fisheries decision-making.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Travis Hoblet
President, Native Village of False Pass

NATIVE VILLAGE OF FALSE PASS

PO Box 29 False Pass, AK 99583 • Phone: (907) 548-2227 • Fax (844) 206-9004 • Email: office@fptribe.net

John Foster
President, Native Village of Unga

Jason Bjornstad
President, Qagan Tayagungin Tribe

Lynn Farr
President, Native Village of Belkofski

Etta Kuzakin
President, Agdaagux Tribe of King Cove

George Gundersen
President, Pauloff Harbor Tribe

Homer Charter Association

P.O. Box 1449
Homer, AK, 9960
February 25, 2026



Senate Resource Committee
Alaska State Legislature

RE: HB 33

Please accept this letter of support for HB 33 from the Homer Charter Association (HCA), “An act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by members of the respective boards; and providing for an effective date”. The Homer Charter Association is a trade group based in Homer, Alaska that represents businesses, guides, and guided recreational stakeholders in the Alaskan communities of the lower Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak. We are proud of our role in the regional economy and of our ability to advocate for responsible fishing practices. We take a hands-on approach, advocating for responsible policy and fishing regulations at the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, International Pacific Halibut Commission, and the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

The current policy prevents board members from providing expertise or guidance on issues for which they have been determined to have a conflict of interest. The HCA believes this undermines the effectiveness and integrity of the Board process. Board members should be appointed based on the knowledge, experience, and skills that they bring to the process. If board members are appointed based on these values, then their exclusion from the very issues and deliberations where they would benefit process the most is non-productive. This bill seeks to remedy that current inefficiency and to benefit the overall effectiveness of the board. The HCA supports that goal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide support for this Bill.

Thank you,
William Hayden
President, Homer Charter Association
Hca99603@gmail.com



Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski, Co-Chair
Senate Resources Committee
CC: Representative Louise Stutes, Chair - House Fisheries

February 26, 2026

RE: Support for HB 33 – Board of Fisheries/Game Conflict of Interest

Senators Giessel and Wielechowski, and Committee Members,

Alaska Boats & Permits, Inc. supports HB 33, which would allow conflicted members of the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game to participate in deliberations on regulatory proposals, while continuing to prohibit them from voting on matters where a conflict exists.

Alaska Boats & Permits, Inc. is Alaska's largest marine brokerage. Since 1997, we have worked with commercial fishermen in every major fishery in the state. As President and owner of the company and a member of a fishing family, I regularly attend Board of Fisheries meetings. The regulatory decisions made by the Board directly affect our business and the thousands of fishermen we serve.

Board members are appointed specifically because of their expertise and experience. Under current rules, that same expertise prevents them from fully participating in discussions due to conflict concerns. This robs the Board of the very knowledge and experience that justified the appointment(s) in the first place.

In addition to on-the-water changes, BOF decisions directly influence the value of limited entry permits, vessels, and fishing businesses across Alaska. Regulatory changes can materially increase or decrease asset values overnight, affecting balance sheets, lending relationships, generational operations, and community stability. In our brokerage work, we see firsthand how regulatory uncertainty impacts financing, transaction timelines, and long-term investment in Alaska's fisheries.

HB 33 strikes a reasonable balance; it preserves ethical safeguards by maintaining the prohibition on voting where a conflict exists, while allowing for more informed deliberations. This approach strengthens transparency and decision making, without undermining public trust. Ensuring that discussions are informed, transparent, and conflict-free is paramount to sustainable fisheries and strong coastal communities.

For these reasons, Alaska Boats & Permits, Inc. respectfully encourages the Senate Resources Committee to support HB 33.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maddie Lightsey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maddie" being more prominent than the last name "Lightsey".

Maddie Lightsey, President



Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation

P.O. Box 1464 • Dillingham, Alaska 99576 • (907) 842-4370 • Fax (907) 842-4337 • 1-800-478-4370

February 25, 2026

Chair Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for HB 33 – Conflict of Interest: Board of Fisheries/Game

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members:

The Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation (BBEDC) writes in support of HB 33, “An Act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by the members of the respective boards; and providing for an effective date.”

BBEDC represents 17 communities and their permit holders in the Bristol Bay region whose livelihoods depend on transparent, well-informed, and effective fisheries governance. We believe HB 33 provides a reasonable and practical improvement to board process by allowing members with a conflict of interest to participate in deliberations while abstaining from voting.

Board members bring significant regional knowledge, historical context, and technical understanding to complex regulatory discussions. When a member must completely leave the table due to a conflict—particularly involving immediate family interests—the board may lose valuable insight that helps clarify the intent, impacts, and allocative effects of a proposal. Allowing conflicted members to remain for deliberation ensures that:

- The board has access to relevant expertise and on-the-ground experience;
- Misunderstandings about a proposal’s practical impacts can be clarified in real time;
- Important questions can be directed to ADF&G staff to help build a complete and accurate record; and
- Deliberations remain transparent and on the record.

Under HB 33, conflicted members would still be prohibited from making motions, offering amendments, voting on amendments, voting on the proposal itself, or voting on reconsideration. This preserves the integrity of the decision-making process while improving the quality and completeness of deliberations.

In our experience, complex fisheries proposals often involve allocative, conservation, and operational considerations that benefit from informed discussion. Providing a structured avenue for participation—without voting authority—strikes an appropriate balance between conflict safeguards and informed governance.

For these reasons, BBEDC respectfully urges the Committee to support HB 33.

Sincerely,

Michael Link
President/CEO

From: [Tyee Lohse](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 11:35:46 PM

Dear Chair Merrick and Committee Members,

My name is Tyee Lohse, I am a commercial, sport, and subsistence fisherman from Cordova, Ak. I am writing to express my support of House Bill 33. I think this would provide a valuable tool for Bof in their deliberations. Sincerely, Tyee G Lohse

From: [Dawn Renner](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: Please support H B 33 the board of fish process needs help this would be a start thank you John Renner
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 8:21:17 AM

From: [brooke.poirot](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#); [Paige Brown](#)
Subject: HB33
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 7:24:33 AM

Senators Giessel and Wielechowski and Committee Members,

My name is Brooke Poirot. I seine in Prince William Sound and I support HB 33 which will allow conflicted Board of Fish (BOF) and Board of Game members to participate in deliberation around regulatory proposals, but NOT to vote.

This bill would improve the Board process by drawing on the knowledge and experience of Board members. This would also demonstrate more trust in the vetting process of the Governor's office and Legislature. Existing BOF conflict of interest rules have driven discussions out of the public forum and made them private. Board members currently declare all conflicts of interest and leave the room if anything on that list is discussed, deliberated, or voted on. Often when a Board member is "conflicted out" and leave the room, they are the only member with any regional or specific knowledge and thus the Board is left with no depth of experience to draw from amongst themselves in deliberations. I support the passing of HB 33 to strengthen the public process and increase transparency.

Another reality of the existing framework is the disproportionate impact on commercial fishermen serving on the BOF. Any participation or permits owned by the member, or their family members, in fisheries around the state result in disqualification due to financial conflicts. Alaska has diverse fisheries that cannot be represented by any single fishery or region. The ability for Board Members to participate in and inform discussions and deliberations on issues a Board member understands first-hand provides critical insight that the Department of Fish and Game, law enforcement and other BOF members often do not have.

I support HB 33, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brooke Poirot

Sent from my iPhone

Feb 26,2026

Senator Cathy Giessel,Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski,Co-chair
Senate Resources Committee

Re:Support for HB33 Board of Fish/Game Conflict of Interest

Dear Senators Giessel and Wielechowski and Committee Members,

My name is Tim Gossett.I have been commercial fishing for almost 50 years now and have run my own vessel since 1987.I serve on the board of Kodiak Seiners Association and have followed and participated in the Board of Fish process for many years.I am writing to you in support of HB33 Board of Fisheries/Game conflict of interest and am hoping you will do the same.

In recent BOF meetings I have noticed that many times the Board member with some of the most specific local knowledge in regards to a particular area is precluded from not only voting but also the deliberation part of the process.I certainly understand the possibility of bias on the part of a board member with a possible conflict of interest such as family members who are economically involved when it comes to voting but the same person may posses valuable local knowledge that others don't have when it comes to deliberation.

In its current form the recusal process on a 7 person committee means possibly losing out on valuable knowledge and pertinent information. For the sake of making the most informed decision possible I strongly urge you to consider supporting this bill.

Thank you for your service and giving me the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully,

Tim Gossett
Laguna Pacific Fisheries, LLC

February 26, 2026

Senator Caathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski, Co-Chair
Senate Resources Committee

RE: Support for HB33-Board of Fish/Game Conflict of Interest

Senators Giessel and Wielechowski and Committee Members,

I have been fishing for over 30 years and running my own vessel since 2004 raising a family on the back deck. I have also been involved in the Board of Fisheries processes for over a decade, and I strongly support HB33 Boards of Fisheries and Game Conflict of Interest that would allow a conflicted member to still take part in deliberations but not vote.

Having knowledgeable members serve on the Board of Fish (BOF) is critical to the process by drawing on their local knowledge and experiences. That local knowledge brings insight that the Department of Fish and Game, law enforcement and other BOF members often do not have. I strongly feel that any conflicted BOF member should not have the ability to vote but at the same time should be part of the public conversation.

This legislation would allow that local knowledge and experience to come to the table during the conversations of the BOF members in public. As things stand now, if a member has a conflict due to themselves or families being involved in a fishery that member must sit in the audience and conversations are not in the public arena. Passing this bill would strengthen the public process by increasing transparency.

In closing I strongly support HB33 and encourage the committee to consider passing this bill out of committee. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Matthew Alward
Owner-Alward Fisheries, LLC



**SEAFOOD PRODUCERS
COOPERATIVE**
SMALL BOATS • INDEPENDENT FISHERMEN • CO-OP VALUES

507 Katlian Ave, Sitka AK 99835

907-747-5811

2/10/2026

HB33

To: Alaska Senate Resources Committee.

Dear sirs,

Today, the existing application of conflict of interest renders commercial fisheries appointees to the Alaska Board of Fisheries unable to discuss, deliberate, or vote on regulations, areas, or proposals, with which they would naturally most familiar.

Since 1975, when Alaska incorporated separate boards of fish & game, a stifling restrictive conflict of interest standard is applied to commercial fishing participants. HB33 addresses a decades long sought after relief of this unnecessary measure. SPC thanks the Sponsors and our position strives to emphasize & reinforce the work of United Fishermen of Alaska, and the associations of seafood harvesters across this state, who like us, sincerely request your support of this bill.

Sincerely,

Richard Davis- Chairman, Seafood Producers Cooperative

Norman Pillen-President, Seafood Producers Cooperative



BRISTOL BAY

Regional Seafood Development Association

House Fisheries Committee
Representative Louise Stutes
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for HB33 Board of Fisheries Conflict of Interest

Dear Representative Stutes,

On behalf of the Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association (BBRSDA), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 33.

This legislation would allow members of the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game to participate in deliberations on matters where they have been deemed to have a conflict of interest, while continuing to prohibit them from voting on those specific issues. Under current policy, board members with a declared conflict are entirely excluded from deliberations. As a result, the Board is unable to fully benefit from their expertise and insight.

Allowing these members to contribute to discussions—while maintaining the prohibition on voting—ensures that all relevant perspectives and critical information are considered during the decision-making process. Board members are appointed for their knowledge, experience, and integrity. Although personal interests may exist, excluding conflicted members from deliberations can lead to decisions made without valuable firsthand experience and technical understanding.

Improving the deliberative process in this way will foster more informed, balanced, and transparent fisheries management decisions.

The Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association represents more than 1,800 permit holders and active commercial fishing vessels operating in the Bristol Bay Management Area. We respectfully urge the Legislature to pass House Bill 33 to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the Board of Fisheries' decision-making process.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Lilani Dunn
Executive Director

TEL (907) 677-2374 • INFO@BBRSDA.COM
3705 ARCTIC BLVD #1188, ANCHORAGE, AK 99503

bbrsda.com • bristolbaysockeye.org • facebook.com/bbrsda

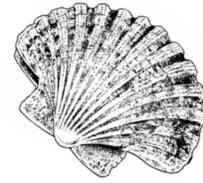
Alaska Scallop Association

PO Box 8989

Kodiak, AK 99615

907-512-7018

Jim@AlaskaScallop.net



**House Fisheries Committee
Representative Louise Stutes
State Capitol Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801**

February 26, 2026

RE: Support for HB33 Board of Fisheries Conflict of Interest

The Alaska Scallop Association represents commercial fishermen who harvest Alaska Scallops. Our association consists of family-owned businesses located in Kodiak, and our vessels operate throughout the state, from Yakutat to Dutch Harbor.

We strongly support HB 33, "An Act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by the members of the respective boards; and providing for an effective date." This bill would permit Board members who have conflicts of interest to engage in deliberations and committee meetings regarding the conflicted issue. While these members would not be allowed to vote, their participation is essential. Their input enables other Board members to benefit from the valuable expertise and insights that conflicted members offer during discussions and Board conversations. Excluding their knowledge undermines the intent of selecting Board members with specialized backgrounds to serve in these roles. Having a conflicted member remain silent and uninvolved is detrimental to the process and does not serve the best interests of the Board.

Regards,

James Stone

Jim Stone, ASA President

From: [Julie Kavanaugh](#)
To: [Rep. Louise Stutes](#)
Cc: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: HB33
Date: Friday, February 27, 2026 8:02:09 AM

Representative Stutes,

We would like to express our gratitude for your continued efforts to make the Ak Boards of Fish & Game work in a way that connects its decision making to the public and industries it serves. Allowing Board members, with connections to resource usage, to deliberate at the table will provide insight and a public record on actual working knowledge and reasoning. We appreciate the balance HB 33 provides and support moving it forward.

Ron and Julie Kavanaugh
Chiniak, Alaska

From: [Tom Hlavnicka](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: House Bill 33
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 1:16:51 PM

I would like to add my support of HB33. I feel it is important to have the knowledge of the members included in the discussion of the various bills. It is fine if they can't vote but their knowledge should not be ignored.

Thank you!

Tom Hlavnicka
Area E fisherman
F/V Ashlynn Rose

From: [Bill Connor](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: I support HB 33
Date: Tuesday, February 24, 2026 2:15:35 PM

Senators I wish to add my support to HB 33.

To not allow the most knowledgeable board members to deliberate and vote on a subject matter is just plain wrong.

We need those with the expertise and experience to fully participate otherwise we are only getting the tire put on the car without any air.

Bill Connor
PO box 1124 Petersburg, AK 99833



CORDOVA DISTRICT
FISHERMEN
— UNITED —

Board of Directors

Michael Hand
President
F/V Sea View

Dennis Zadra
Vice-President
F/V Raging Bull

Forest Jenkins
Vice-President
Eshamy Setnet

Steven Swartzbart
Treasurer
F/V Alpine

Hayley Hoover
F/V Nellie Juan

Mike Meints
F/V Morning Star

Ron Blake
F/V Ace

Marc Carrel
F/V Silver Moon

Andrew Scudder
F/V Gorbuscha

Makena O'Toole
F/V Freyja Dawn

Phyllis Shirron
F/V Cape Fear

John Kraning
F/V Mongrel

Staff

Kelsey Hayden
Operations Director + FVA

Hannah Heimbuch
Policy Director

January 15, 2026

Chair Sen. Kelly Merrick
Alaska State Capitol
Community and Regional Affairs Committee
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support HB 33 – Conflict of Interest Bill

Dear Chair Merrick and Committee Members,

Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) is an industry-based nonprofit strengthening commercial fishing in the Prince William Sound region by advocating for the needs of community-based fishermen. Since 1935, CDFU has represented fishermen and their families for thriving fisheries that sustain regional ecosystems, communities, and ways of life - ensuring they are well informed, resourced, and mobilized to affect positive change for all harvesters in the region.

We are writing to offer our support for the conflict of interest bill HB 33, as it pertains to the Board of Fisheries.

When a conflict of interest for a Board of Fisheries member is registered, CDFU sees great value for Board of Fisheries members to continue to participate in deliberations, but abstain from voting on the official matters in perceived conflict because of their areas of expertise. For example, a board member with immediate familial conflicts should be able to remain at the table while deliberations on a proposal occur, participate in the discussion about what the proposal means, speak to the allocative aspects of the proposal if necessary. More importantly, a board member's conflict of interest can indicate a close understanding of a particular matter - it's important to be able to participate and elucidate other board members when the full effects or intents of a proposal are not being discussed.



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— UNITED —

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Policy Director

“Participating in deliberations” would allow a board member to discuss the proposal, to answer questions if asked, to ask questions of ADF&G 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.

Board members who conflict out of deliberations bring valuable information and resources to the discussion that other board members could benefit from. Allowing board members to participate in deliberations would put discussions on record and bring greater transparency to the process. We are in favor of board members with a conflict of interest participating in deliberations, but refraining from voting.

Sincerely,

Michael Hand, *Board President*
Cordova District Fishermen United



CORDOVA DISTRICT
FISHERMEN
— UNITED —

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January 15, 2026

Chair Sen. Kelly Merrick
Alaska State Capitol
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120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

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FISHERMEN
— UNITED —

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Sincerely,

Michael Hand, *Board President*
Cordova District Fishermen United

From: [Jonny Antoni](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 10:22:33 AM

Dear Representative Louise Stutes,

I am a Commercial troller and kelp farmer that lives year round in Juneau, Alaska with my wife and almost 2 kids.

I am writing in strong support of HB 33. It's not about experience, it's about good governance.

As someone who is a commercial harvester, I understand firsthand how important informed and balanced fishery management decisions are for Alaska families and communities.

Currently, when a member of the Alaska Board of Fisheries is conflicted out of a proposal, they must sit in the audience during deliberations and are not allowed to contribute to discussion at the table. A member is considered conflicted if they or an immediate family member have a financial interest in a fishery. "Immediate family" is defined broadly — including a spouse, adult children, siblings, aunts, uncles, a spouse's family, and grandparents.

Members of the Board of Fisheries are appointed specifically because of their history, experience, and knowledge in fisheries. HB 33 ensures that this expertise can still be shared during deliberations, while maintaining ethical safeguards. Importantly, the bill still requires conflicted members to be recused from voting and from offering amendments.

Passing HB 33 will strengthen resource management statewide, increase transparency in Alaska's fishery management process, and align board procedures with the intent that members' diverse knowledge and experience inform decisions. Maintaining the status quo continues to restrict valuable expertise from the discussion table. HB 33 provides a common-sense improvement and remains more stringent than the conflict-of-interest requirements that apply to members of the Alaska Legislature.

I respectfully urge you to support HB 33.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

--

Jonny Antoni



(909)605-3539

From: [Norm Campbell](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 3:45:56 PM

I support HB33 I would like your support also, Norm Campbell commercial fisherman 50 years

February 26, 2026

Chair and Members of the Senate Resources Committee,

My name is Nate Rose. I have lived in Kodiak most of my life and have worked in the commercial fishing industry for over twenty years. For the past fifteen years, I have operated my own fishing business in the Kodiak area. I currently fish for salmon, crab, cod, rockfish, and halibut, which gives me a broad year-round perspective on how management decisions affect not just one fishery but the entire coastal economy and community.

Over the years, I have been approached about serving on the Board of Fisheries because of my experience and my familiarity with the Kodiak Area Management Plan. As a salmon fisherman in Kodiak, understanding that plan is not optional. It is part of doing the my responsibly and successfully. The same is true for the other fisheries I participate in. Fishermen who operate across multiple fisheries see firsthand how decisions in one area ripple into others, affecting opportunity, conservation, and community stability.

Despite being honored by those requests to serve, I have consistently declined. The reason is simple. I know that under the current conflict of interest framework, I would likely be recused from deliberations on many of the issues where my knowledge is most relevant. In a small coastal region like Kodiak, the people with the deepest understanding of the fisheries are often the same people whose livelihoods are directly tied to them. If those individuals cannot fully participate, the Board loses critical real-world insight.

I also want to address the suggestion that conflicted members can still contribute through public testimony. While public testimony is an essential part of the process, it is not equivalent to participating in deliberations as an appointed Board member. Public testimony occurs before deliberations begin and before Board members have had the opportunity to hear the full range of testimony, ask questions of staff, or engage in discussion. The ability to speak at the end of the meeting, after hearing all perspectives and understanding the direction of the discussion, is fundamentally different and far more meaningful.

Participating in deliberations, even without voting, would allow a conflicted Board member to discuss proposals, answer questions if asked, ask questions of staff, help build the record, and share informed perspectives shaped by decades of experience. They would still not be able to make motions, vote, or influence outcomes directly, but their knowledge would be available to other Board members and to the public. This would strengthen transparency and improve the quality of decision making.

In previous discussions of this issue, it has been noted that Board members who recuse themselves often possess valuable information and institutional knowledge that other members could benefit from. Allowing them to participate in deliberations without voting would put that information on the record and ensure that decisions are informed by those who understand the fisheries at the ground level.

Kodiak and other coastal communities have a limited pool of people with the experience, willingness, and ability to serve on boards like this. If policies unintentionally discourage knowledgeable fishermen from accepting appointments, the long-term result may be a Board that is less connected to the realities of the fisheries it governs.

I appreciate your consideration of these perspectives from someone who lives and works in the fisheries year round. My hope is that the process will continue to evolve in a way that preserves both integrity and practical expertise at the table.

Thank you for your time and for your service to Alaska.

Respectfully,
Nathaniel Rose
Kodiak, Alaska



April 11, 2025

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
House Rules Committee
Emailed to: House.Rules@akleg.gov

RE: Support for HB 33 - Conflict of Interest: Board of Fisheries/Game

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

The Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA) supports HB 33: “An Act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by the members of the respective boards; and providing for an effective date.” PSPA is comprised of major seafood processing companies that participate in almost every fishery across Alaska and thus rely heavily on the decisions of the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF). These companies purchase millions of pounds of fish from independent fishermen each year and process those fish in 23 coastal Alaska communities, from Ketchikan to Cordova to Kodiak to Unalaska, and on two floating processors which serve even more remote locations. The sustainability and viability of these fisheries are reliant on a BOF process that can garner as much expertise and knowledge of the implications of the decisions as possible, in meetings that at times review hundreds of proposals.

PSPA supports allowing BOF members to participate in deliberations, but abstain from voting, when they are determined to have a conflict of interest. Alaska is a small state in many ways; thus, it is very common for a board member to have family members involved in the fisheries at issue. We believe it adds tremendous value to the process to allow members with such conflicts to participate in the discussion and deliberations, because they often best understand the nuance or complexities of the fishery and/or understand questions to ask of ADFG or testifiers to help elucidate the key issues. ADFG staff are often very limited in their responses regarding the impacts of a proposed action, with the intent to remain objective on issues of allocation. Expertise and experience conveyed transparently within the public process from all members serves the BOF process such that issues are more fully understood by the BOF and the public prior to decision-making.

BOF members are nominated by the Governor and confirmed by the legislature for their knowledge of the fisheries over which the BOF has authority. It makes sense to prohibit motion-

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making, amending motions, or voting on an issue in which a board member has a conflict. However, prohibiting a Board Member from participating in the discussion at all is to ignore the expertise that brought them to the BOF in the first place. This change is also more consistent with fish and wildlife management processes across the U.S.

In sum, making this change to the process under HB 33 would benefit BOF members less familiar with the issue at hand and the resulting decision-making, with the end result improving the process and benefitting Alaskans and the fisheries resource. We support HB 33 and greatly appreciate the committee's review. Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Decker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Julie Decker
President, PSPA
Wrangell, Alaska



2/24/2026

Senate Resources Committee

120 4th Street, Juneau AK 99801

RE: Support for HB 33 “An Act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by members of the respective boards;”

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association, or PVOA is a commercial fisheries advocacy group representing the needs of the commercial fishing industry and support business that it relies on. PVOA members participate in State and Federal fisheries throughout Alaska and along the West Coast and our membership relies on sound management structures to ensure the longevity and stability in the industry. PVOA supports HB 33 and sees it as an opportunity to elevate the decision-making process at the Board of Fisheries by allowing for valuable, experiential knowledge to be interjected in the deliberation process.

The issue that HB 33 is trying to fix is that currently, a board member at Board of Fisheries meetings cannot participate in deliberation or vote on a commercial fishery decision that they, or a family member is invested in. While we recognize the concern that current conflict of interest rules stem from, it also eliminates the ability for a board member with knowledge of a particular fishery from partaking in the conversation to provide context or clarify questions during the deliberation stage of the process. This can lead to decision making without all available information that could be provided and works to dissuade fishermen from participating in the process and attempt to get on the board, as they know that they would not be allowed to speak on the subject matter that they know most about. PVOA supports the language of HB 33 that allows for knowledgeable Board members to participate in deliberation, but remain unable to vote on potential conflicts of interest.

We also see this bill as an evening of the playing field among all three user groups of the fisheries resources; commercial, sport and subsistence. A board member that participates in sport and/or subsistence harvest of a specific fishery is often allowed to partake in deliberation, but a commercial harvester that harvests that same fishery is not allowed to participate or vote.

PVOA sees this as an imbalanced management structure by excluding certain users from providing pertinent information for decision making. Many of our fisheries throughout the State have a commercial, sport and subsistence harvest component to them. When the commercial component is routinely left out of the conversation or dissuaded from providing information or points of clarification, it degrades trust in the system for fishermen and does not work encourage further participation by the user group.

PVOA supports HB 33 and thanks the Senate Resources Committee for the opportunity to provide comments today and look forward to answering any further questions the Committee may have.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nels Evens".

Nels Evens

Executive Director

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association

pvoa@gci.net

From: [Ben Behan](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: Support HB 33
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 4:37:09 PM

Chair Merrick and Committee Members,

My name is Ben Behan and I currently reside in Trempealeau, Wisconsin. This upcoming summer will mark my seventh season being a part of the commercial set gillnet fishery located in the Eshamy District of Prince William Sound. Additionally, I have participated in the commercial shrimp and drift gillnet fisheries in the sound as well as the various sport fisheries that the sound has to offer. I currently sit as the setnet seat on the PWSAC board of directors and am a member of both CDFU and the Prince William Sound Setnetters' Association.

In regards to HB 33, I believe that Board of Fisheries members should be able to participate in deliberations but abstain from voting on matters where a conflict of interest may arise. There are many occasions where a board member has very in depth knowledge on a fisheries subject, but must refrain from discussing the matter and educating others due to their direct ties with the matter at hand. Removing a board member from participating in deliberations that they are exceptionally knowledgeable in hurts board members and all fishery users alike.

Sincerely,
Ben Behan

From: [Carlin Hoblet](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#); [Paige Brown](#)
Subject: Support HB 33
Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026 8:39:10 PM

Dear Chair Stutes and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB 33.

Allowing for continued deliberation ensures that the committee benefits from the full expertise and perspective of all members, even when a technical conflict exists. While I support this change as a practical improvement, I do not believe this measure alone is sufficient to fully address the circumvention of ethics disclosures that I recently witnessed at the February Board of Fisheries meetings.

I urge the committee to pass this bill as a positive step forward, and I encourage the consideration of more robust actions in the future to ensure total transparency and accountability in our ethical disclosure processes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Carlin Hoblet

From: [Steven Swartzbart](#)
To: [Senate Resources](#)
Subject: Support HB 33
Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2026 8:09:51 AM

I support HB 33 because it is important for board members to have relevant experience in the fisheries they are making decisions on. A big part of advocating for my fishery is educating the board of fish. Many of the board members have no commercial fishing experience and when a proposal comes up that they are experts on, they have to be left out of the conversation.

HB 33 will improve the board process and keep relevant experience and facts at the front of the conversation when discussing proposals.

Thank you,

Steven Swartzbart
Cordova, AK