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

February 4, 2025

Re: Support for HB33 Board of Fisheries Conflict of Interest

I submit this letter on behalf of the Alaska Longline Fisherman's Association (ALFA) 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." ALFA's members are commercial fishing vessel owners, deckhands and business owners spread throughout Alaska and the Western United States. Our members harvest halibut, sablefish, salmon, crab, shrimp and other resources regulated through the Board of Fisheries process. Many are also avid hunters who live a subsistence lifestyle and hunt and fish to provide food for their families. ALFA supports HB33 because it enables Board of Fisheries members to provide their expertise and knowledge through the deliberative stage of the process. It maintains the intent of the Executive Branch Ethics Act by precluding board members from voting on regulatory proposals for which they may have a potential personal or financial interest under Alaska's Executive Branch Ethics Act.

When strictly interpreted, the Executive Branch Ethics Act undermines the Board of Fisheries process. The act prohibits Board members from acting in matters in which they have a personal or financial interest by providing advice, assistance, or even participating in the process.¹ Under the current Board of Fisheries process, each Board member discloses any possible conflicts of interest at the beginning of the meeting and then may not serve on any committee considering regulatory proposals which may implicate those conflicts and must leave the table during discussion, deliberation and voting. The recusal can occur in cases where the potentially conflicted Board member is the most knowledgeable member with regard to a specific regulatory proposal.

There are only seven members of the Board of Fisheries.² The governor appoints Board members based on their knowledge about fisheries issues and with the aim of maintaining a Board composition that allows for a diversity of interests and points of view.³ Board members use their knowledge in the regulatory process in numerous ways which in general regulates all state water fisheries," as needed for the conservation, development and utilization of fisheries."⁴ These decisions often require knowledge about the history of different fisheries, current fishery participation trends and practices and the local and statewide importance of different fisheries.⁵

This legislation will help strengthen the Board of Fisheries process and further the statutory purpose of the board

¹ AS §§ 39.52.960(14)), AS 39.52.120(b)(4).

² AS § 16.05.221(a).

³ AS § 16.05.221.

⁴ AS §§ 16.05.251(a)(1)-(12).

⁵ AS § 16.05.251(3).

by fully utilizing the experience and knowledge of its members. The current prohibition on participation in deliberations prevents Board members from sharing their expertise to inform the process.

The current recusal process is particularly prejudicial toward Board members from the commercial fishing industry because permit ownership and fishery participation are the most ascertainable potential conflicts. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Board Support Section explains that "[c]onflicts are typically found when a board member or their immediate family members have a significant economic or personal interest in a fishery." Data compiled by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game's Board Support Section show that recusals are much more common for the Board of Fisheries.

In the fisheries world, a potentially conflicted Board member will be the leading Board expert in a particular fishery or region. For a Board consisting of seven members, the recusal of one expert in a particular commercial fishery or region from deliberations often means regulatory decisions result from incomplete information. HB 33 will address this significant problem.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Behnken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Linda Behnken
Executive Director

Kodiak Seiners Association
PO Box 8835
Kodiak, AK 99615
kodiakseiners@gmail.com
February 20, 2025

House Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature

RE: Support for House Bill 33 – Board of Fisheries Conflict of Interest Legislation

Dear Co-Chairs Burke and Dibert, and Members of the House Resources Committee,

On behalf of the Kodiak Seiners Association (KSA), I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 33. This legislation would allow members of the Board of Fisheries & Board of Game to participate in deliberations on matters where they have been deemed to have a conflict of interest, while still prohibiting them from voting on those issues.

Under the current policy, board members with a declared conflict are entirely excluded from deliberations. This restriction prevents the Board from fully benefiting from their expertise and insights. We believe that allowing these members to contribute to discussions—without voting—ensures that all relevant perspectives and critical information are considered in the decision-making process.

Board members are appointed for their knowledge, experience, and integrity. While personal interests may be present, excluding conflicted members from deliberations can lead to decisions made without crucial input from those with firsthand experience. We firmly believe that improving the deliberative process in this way will lead to more informed and balanced fisheries management decisions.

The Kodiak Seiners Association represents 70 permit holders and active commercial fishing vessels operating in the Kodiak Management Area. We 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 feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Darren Platt
President
Kodiak Seiners Association



RESIDENT HUNTERS OF ALASKA

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www.residenthuntersofalaska.org

February 5, 2025

To: House Fisheries Committee

Re: HB 33 - Conflict of Interest Boards of Fisheries and Game

Dear Chair Stutes and members of the House Fisheries Committee,

Resident Hunters of Alaska (RHAK) is a hunting conservation organization with some 3,500 members from across the state who support sustainable wildlife management policies and a resident hunting priority as mandated in Article 8 of our state constitution.

RHAK **supports** HB 33 as currently drafted to allow Board of Fisheries and Board of Game members who declare they have a conflict of interest on a proposal before them to still be allowed to participate in deliberations.

There are many instances, particularly on the Board of Fisheries, when the most knowledgeable board member on a specific proposal before the board must declare a conflict of interest, because he or she or a family member has a financial interest in the outcome of a proposal. Under the current system, that member then cannot even deliberate on that proposal. It is important that we allow a member of either board who declares a conflict of interest, who may have intimate knowledge regarding a proposal, to at least participate in deliberations over that proposal.

It is equally important, however, that a member with a declared conflict of interest on a particular proposal is **not** allowed to vote on that proposal.

Sincerely,

Mark Richards – Executive Director Resident Hunters of Alaska



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance

1008 Fish Creek Rd

Juneau, AK 99801

Email: kathy@seafa.org

Cell Phone: 907-465-7666

Fax: 907-917-5470

Website: <http://www.seafa.org>

February 18, 2025

House Special Committee on Fisheries
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: SUPPPORT HB 33 – CONFLICT OF INTEREST BOARD OF FISH/GAME

Dear Representative Louise Stutes and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) strongly supports HB 33 which allows Board of Fish (BOF) and Board of Game members to deliberate on regulatory proposals. SEAFA supports this legislation that would allow participation in the deliberations, sharing the Board members knowledge of the area/fishery but not voting as a compromise to current practices. Our testimony will focus on the Board of Fish aspect of this legislation. This is the most critical piece of legislation that can be passed to help strengthen the Board of Fish process as a transparent public process. The strength of the Board process is that it is a lay board with members having a variety of knowledge and different backgrounds. **When board members aren't allowed to use their knowledge to inform the process and educate fellow board members it discourages highly qualified individuals from submitting their name for the board.**

Currently at the beginning of the meeting, a Board member declares and discloses any possible conflicts. For those proposals, the Board member does not serve on the committee hearing on that proposal, and the Board member must leave the table when the proposal is being discussed, deliberated and voted on. Before the board even considers the proposal during deliberations, the meeting is actually stopped so the Board member can walk to the public portion of the meeting room, like sending a kindergarten kid to the corner of the room when they get in trouble. Often the Board member in conflict is the only Board member with an understanding of the issue being discussed. **A Board of Fish member is vetted by the Governor's office and the Legislature before being confirmed, we should have some trust in that process.**

If HB 33 passes, the other board members are reminded when a proposal is first introduced during deliberations that a member has a conflict, the remaining board members will then view any information provided during deliberations with a lens of understanding that the Board

member has a financial conflict and may be affected by the outcome of the proposal similar to the current process at the State Legislature.

When I first started attending Board of Fish meetings in 1988, this was the process used and it worked. With changes to the ethics act, this changed and has not been a healthy change for public transparency of the process. With the current conflict of interest process in place, discussions with the board member with the knowledge of the issue and the conflict takes place in the background and not in front of the public as it should be because they know they won't be able to share their expertise on the proposal during deliberations. **Similar to the State Legislature, board member expertise provides the crucial and educational information to ensure that those allowed to vote are informed prior to voting.**

Commercial fishermen tend to have more conflicts from proposals than other members involved in the sport or subsistence fisheries. This is probably a combination of more commercial proposal as well as being able to define a financial conflict of interest easily by the fisheries they participate in and hold limited entry permits for. It is important to have fishermen with a variety of background, gear types and fisheries because fishing and fishing gear can be complicated with small nuances that even the Dept of Fish and Game and Enforcement do not always understand.

It is our opinion that the Board of Fisheries has gone too far to the letter of the law of the Executive Branch Ethics Act and has forgotten that the State want the industry members to participate as is true with the State Legislature. If you look at the majority of the Boards and Commissions in the state that are tied to types of licenses, they are exempted from the Executive Branch Ethics Act so that the members involved in the industry are full able to participate (i.e. barbers, teacher, medical professions, professional Guide board, Marine pilots etc.). **This legislation by allowing participation but not voting on a proposal, we believe meets the intent of the Ethics Act. Please pass HB 33 to provide the Board of Fish the benefit of the knowledge of the Board member and a clear and transparent public process.**

SEAFa is a multi-gear/multi-species membership based commercial fishing association representing our 300+ members primarily involved in the salmon, crab, shrimp fisheries of Southeast Alaska as well as longline fisheries in SE and the Gulf of Alaska.

Sincerely,

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

Kathy Hansen
Executive Director



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

February 5, 2026

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

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

Dear Chair Stutes and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. UFA 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."

UFA has long advocated allowing Board of Fisheries members to participate in deliberations but abstain from voting when they are considered to have a conflict of interest. To clarify, UFA believes that the board member with immediate familial conflicts should be able to stay at the table while deliberations occur and participate in the discussion about what the proposal means, speak to the allocative aspects of the proposal if necessary, and more importantly, clarify when it becomes apparent that the board members are not understanding the effects and intents of the proposal. This can sometimes be done by speaking to the proposal directly or asking ADF&G staff the right questions. We have noticed over the years that sometimes even when the board is asking for information and direction from ADF&G staff on how a proposal is allocative; they are not answered because ADF&G does not want to appear to be arguing for one side of the allocation or another.

"Participating in deliberations" would allow a board member to discuss the proposal, to answer questions if asked, to ask questions of 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.

In testimonies for previous versions of this bill, we have heard that a board member may participate in public testimony and participate in the committee process if they have a conflict of interest. While this is true, it is UFA's position that 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.

Regards,



Matt Alward
President



Tracy Welch
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association • Alaska Trollers Association
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Area M Seiners Association • At-sea Processors Association
Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association • Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen
Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Fishing Vessel
Owners Assn Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association • Kodiak Crab Alliance Cooperative • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture
Association • Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Northwest
Setnetters Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner
Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance • Southeast
Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners
Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
Valdez Fisheries Development Association

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

Box 2196, Petersburg AK 99833 * (253) 279-0707 * usag.alaska@gmail.com * akgillnet.org

USAG'S MAIN PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT, SERVE AND ENHANCE SOUTHEAST ALASKA'S COMMERCIAL GILLNET FISHERY

February 5, 2025

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
House Fisheries Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Stutes and Committee members-

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters would like to offer our support for HB 33. Our organization has been active in the Board of Fisheries process for many cycles. The issues facing Board members are often unique to specific species and areas far from the realm of knowledge of many Board members. On occasion, a Board member will be conflicted from deliberations and voting on proposals due to his or her involvement, or a family member's involvement in a particular fishery. Unfortunately, the Board member conflicted has the greatest knowledge of the intricacies of the fishery, knowledge that would likely be helpful to other Board members in deliberations. HB 33 would allow those conflicted members to deliberate on the subject, but would not allow them to vote, thereby imparting their expertise on the subject. It is our belief that passage of this bill will make the process better, as more information and understanding is always better in making these sometimes highly allocative decisions.

Currently, there are no Board members from our area, Southeast Alaska. This is partly due to the fact there are people in the commercial fishing industry who are willing, but who would find themselves conflicted when they have meetings for our region. Our opinion is that passage of this bill will give a larger, and more knowledgeable pool of people to support for this very important job.

We appreciate your consideration of this bill, and will be following its progress.



Max Worhatch, Executive Director

From: [Jeff Farvour](#)
To: [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Subject: Support for HB 33
Date: Monday, February 16, 2026 3:01:09 PM

Dera Chair Merrick and Committee Members,

My name is Jeff Farvour. I am a full time commercial fisherman that resides in Sitka. I'm also a long time participant in BOF and other fisheries forums. I ask for your support for HB 33.

Currently, due the outdated and ineffective policy that prevents knowledgeable BOF members from participating in discussions, debate and even asking clarifying questions, BOF decisions can often lack key elements that facilitate intended outcomes. These outdated policies also put a massive strain on BOF members, BOF staff and BOF participants to educate and inform the BOF process.

Additionally, a primary tenet of the BOF process is to have BOF members with fisheries and region specific knowledge that can provide the perspective to make informed decisions. This would encourage a stronger pool of eligible BOF members, improve transparency and help build stronger policies and records.

Thank you for your consideration and your service,

Jeff Farvour
Sitka, AK

Sorcha Hazelton

From: Jade Powell [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 9:35 AM
To: Senate Community and Regional Affairs
Cc: Sen. Löki Tobin; Rep. Zack Fields
Subject: HB26 Testimony

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Good morning,

I am a resident of Anchorage, Zip: 99503. I am strongly in support of the changes made in HB26, as they update statute to reflect the realities of DOT's responsibility to the state, the fiscal realities we face, and the potential that we have for positive changes in the future.

Regional transit planning with an emphasis on public transit and collaboration between regional metropolitan planning organizations (such as the one recently established in the valley) is critical to using the state's limited fiscal resources responsibly to help Alaskan's move safely and affordably around our massive state.

Here in Anchorage, we have thousands of people driving back and forth between Anchorage and the Mat-su valley every day, a trend that sees no sign of slowing down as Anchorage housing costs remain sky high and push more people to the valley. Each person who can access thoughtfully planned public transportation like Valley Transit represents a massive cost savings for that individual, leaving more money to go into local economies and counteract the affordability crisis we are facing statewide- a win for the state.

But even more powerfully, if we can shift a meaningful amount of those commuters towards alternative transit modes, we can ensure our incredibly expensive highway system capacity is preserved for others for whom alternative transit modes make less sense, AND we can strengthen our local transit networks with additional ridership that benefits everyone.

Thank you,
Jade Powell



**SEAFOOD PRODUCERS
COOPERATIVE**
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507 Katlian Ave, Sitka Alaska 99835

907-747-5811

Thank you Senators,

Seafood Producers Cooperative supports passage of House Bill 33, which relieves the strict conflict of interest exclusion on board of fish members with disclosed family and fisheries business ties to BOF proposals.

Our Co-op fishermen-member owners have, since our inception in 1944, continuously harvested, processed & marketed premium Alaska seafood products for over 3/4 of a century. The members of SPC and their families have been consistent participants in all Alaskan political and regulatory fishery processes. An incalculable number of our members, past and present, have served on fish & game advisory committees across Alaska. Knowledgeable, diligent, capable, compassionate and wise commercial fishers from across Alaska, who with passage of this bill, would make ideal Board of Fish candidates.

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 be 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



Adelia Myrick
President
907-654-9094
northwestsetnetter@gmail.com
northwestsetnetters.org

To: Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee

Re: Support for HB 33

Date: 1/30/2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on HB 33. We were unable to attend the hearing this week but wanted to go on record with our strong support of HB 33.

The Northwest Setnetters Association represents set-gillnet fishermen from Kodiak's Northwest district. Our board supports your efforts on this bill because we strongly believe that HB 33 will contribute to a more robust, informed public process through the Board of Fish, which would benefit all users. We agree that BOF members with a declared conflict of interest should not be able to vote but *should* be able to participate in discussions, because often they are the ones who have the most nuanced understanding of specific issues. Especially in such a large state with complex and varied fisheries issues, it is important to hear from those who can help shed light on their specific areas of expertise.

Passage of this bill will help elevate the quality of Board of Fish discussions.

Thank you for all your work to date on HB 33.

Sincerely,

Adelia Myrick
President, Northwest Setnetters Association



February 2, 2026

RE: HB 33 - Conflict of Interest Bill

Dear Representative Stutes and Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) represents over 100 seine permit holders. SEAS' is on record as supporting this legislation in the last legislative cycle and again is an advocate for this change. We believe allowing Board of Fisheries members to participate in deliberations but abstain from voting when they are considered to have a conflict of interest will add valuable information, history, and knowledge to matters that come before this body. As it stands now, many times the only other people in the room who may have similar knowledge and background that are allowed to speak are ADF&G staff; much of the time they do not participate in these deliberations to avoid the appearance of arguing for any "side" when there may be allocation implications in the outcome.

"Participating in deliberations" would allow a board member to discuss the proposal, to answer questions if asked, to ask questions of 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.

Sincerely,

Phil Doherty
Executive Director – SEAS
PO Box 6238
Ketchikan, AK 99901



January 28, 2026

Dear Senator Kelly Merrick and Members of the Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee,

On behalf of the Kodiak Seiners Association (KSA), we respectfully submit the following public comment in support of HB 33, which would allow members of the Board of Fisheries to participate in deliberations, but not vote on matters for which they have a declared conflict of interest.

KSA believes the current conflict-of-interest framework unintentionally weakens the Board's decision-making process by excluding critical expertise at the most consequential stage of board action: formal deliberation. While existing policy technically allows recused members to testify as members of the public, this is not an adequate substitute for participation at the board table during deliberations.

Public testimony is fundamentally different from board deliberation in both function and impact. Testimony is time-limited, non-interactive, and not part of the official record of board intent in the same way deliberations are. Once the Board enters formal deliberations, members synthesize testimony, question assumptions, clarify intent, and establish the framework that guides regulatory interpretation and implementation by the Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Law. Excluding knowledgeable board members from this phase does not eliminate influence, rather it removes context, regional understanding, and practical insight at the moment it is most needed.

Board members are appointed precisely because of their experience, integrity, and knowledge of Alaska's fisheries. In many cases, particularly in commercial, subsistence, or sport fisheries, a member's expertise is inseparable from personal or financial involvement. Preventing these members from contributing during deliberations deprives the remaining board members of essential information and risks decisions being made with an incomplete understanding of on-the-ground realities.

HB 33 maintains an important safeguard: conflicted members would still be prohibited from voting. This preserves ethical boundaries while recognizing that informed deliberation is not the same as exerting improper influence. Allowing non-voting participation strikes a reasonable and balanced approach to protect the public trust while strengthening the quality of the Board's work.

We respectfully disagree with the assertion that allowing conflicted members to deliberate would undermine the integrity of the Board. To the contrary, integrity is strengthened when decisions are made transparently, with all relevant expertise available, and when deliberations reflect the full diversity of knowledge the legislature intended when establishing these boards.

The Kodiak Seiners Association represents 105 commercial salmon permit holders and active fishing vessels operating in the Kodiak Management Area. Our members depend on fair, informed, and durable fisheries management decisions. We believe HB 33 improves the Board of Fisheries' ability to meet that responsibility and serves the long-term public interest of Alaska's fisheries.

We appreciate the committee's thoughtful consideration of HB 33 and respectfully encourage you to keep this important conversation moving forward. We hope the bill will be advanced to the Senate Resources Committee for further discussion, where the impacts on fisheries management and board function can continue to be examined in depth. Thank you for your time, attention, and continued commitment to effective and informed resource governance and for the opportunity to provide comment.

Respectfully,

Astrid Rose
Kodiak Seiners Association
Executive Director

From: [jerry mccune](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Subject: Fwd: Hb33
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 4:04:26 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: jerry mccune [REDACTED]
Date: January 27, 2026 at 3:40:09 PM AKST
To: "representative.louise.stutes@akleg.gov"
Subject: Hb33

Chair Merrick,

I support HB 33 for all kinds of reasons. I have commercial fished for sixty five years in Cordova Alaska and attended BOF meeting since the 1970. If I was to be appointed to the Board of Fish I would be conflicted out on most gillnet proposals being I have a permit and a son that fishes in the fishery. My first point is why be on Board of Fisheries if I can't talk about a fishery which I'm a expert in I would want the same for all boards members. It is a small board not one person can know all the answers for the whole state commercial or sport. Most real important questions come up at the end during deliberations I would know more than Fish and Game are the other board members about my area. Not all proposals are about allocations .

This keeps folks from putting there name in for BOF knowing that they can't talk if conflicted out about there area and fishery .

Allowing this also prevent the BOF from making a mistake just because lack of accurate information which could affect a lot of Alaskans. Thank you for your considering this very important bill time for a change .

Jerry McCune

Sent from my iPad

From: [Norm Campbell](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 10:54:13 AM

Dear Senators,
My name is Norman Campbell
I am a fisherman of Cordova
I have fished for 50 years

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,
Norman Campbell

John O'Connor

[REDACTED]

Wasilla, AK 99654

[REDACTED]

9 [REDACTED]

1/29/2026

To:

Members of the Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Support for Alaska House Bill 33 (Conflict of Interest: Boards of Fisheries and Game)

Dear Senators and Members of the Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee,

Due to a scheduling conflict, I was not able to testify at the public hearing on HB 33, am writing today to express my strong support for **House Bill 33**, currently referred to the Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee. HB33 is an important step toward strengthening **ethical standards and conflict-of-interest protections** for members of the **Alaska Board of Fisheries** and the **Board of Game**.

As a 59-year-old, lifelong resident of Alaska and a stakeholder in the Bristol Bay Salmon fishery, I believe that **public confidence** in decisions affecting our fish and wildlife resources is foundational to sound resource management. Ensuring that people with the appropriate knowledge base invested in the utilization of the resources can become effective board members that can participating in decisions before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game do so without conflicts of interest will help enhance the **quality, integrity, transparency, and fairness** of board actions. HB33's clear focus on ethical participation will foster public trust in deliberations that have profound cultural, economic, and environmental impacts for our state.

Alaska's abundant fisheries and wildlife resources are essential to our subsistence lifestyles, commercial enterprises, tourism, and cultural traditions. Policies that govern how these decisions are made must be made by knowledgeable people and reflect the **highest ethical standards** and protect decision-making from undue influence. I strongly support HB33 as a measure that uplifts these standards and urge the Senate to act favorably on this bill.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of this important matter. I respectfully request that you support HB33 and move it forward in the legislative process.

Sincerely,

John O'Connor

From: [John Williams](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Matt Gruening](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 12:20:01 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is John Williams
I am a fisherman from Cordova, Alaska, for the past 10 years.

I couldn't call in on Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for the Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.
Thank you,

John Williams
Cordova, Area E Drift gillnet and 3A Halibut

From: [Brandon maxwell](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#); [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 1:13:16 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is Brandon Maxwell
I am a fisherman of Area E
I have fished for 17 years

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,

Brandon Maxwell
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Finn Gross](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Cc: [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 2:31:55 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is Finn Gross
I am a fisherman of the copper river/ Prince William sound and Ketchikan areas
I have fished for the past 6 years

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,

From: [James Burton](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#); [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 3:39:04 PM

Dear Senators,

My name is James Burton. I am a fisherman out of Cordova, Ak and I have been commercial fishing since the 80s.

I couldn't call in Tuesday as I was elbows deep in an old Caterpillar engine, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

The way we handle conflict of interests in BOF members is in need of overhaul. When a member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. I've served on city council and have been a part of numerous issues over the years with conflicts of interest, and while voting may be inappropriate, discussing the matter is not.

Members with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,

James Burton

From: [Forest Jenkins](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#); [Matt Gruening](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 5:13:38 PM

Dear Senators,

My name is Forest Jenkins. I am the Prince William Sound Setnetters' Association President. I am a Prince William Sound setnetter, drift gillnetter, and commercial pot shrimper. I have fished for 19 years in the Prince William Sound and spend my winters advocating for my fisheries.

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,
Forest Jenkins
PWSSA President

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Forest Jenkins
Eshamy Bay Setnet



From: [Darin Gilman](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Cc: [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 6:22:00 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is Darin Gilman
I am a fisherman of
I have fished for 18 years

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,

-Kind Regards, Darin

From: [Heather Maxcy](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Cc: [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 6:56:21 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is Chris Maxcy.
I am a fisherman of
I have fished for 37 years

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,
Chris Maxcy


From: [brian.rutzer](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Cc: [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 7:11:49 PM

Dear Senators,

My name is Brian Rutzer

I am a fishermen in Cordova, where I have fished for 36 years and raised a family.

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,

Brian Rutzer

From: [Hanson family](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#); [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#)
Cc: [Matt Gruening](#)
Subject: Support: HB 33 Conflict of Interest Bill
Date: Thursday, January 29, 2026 9:48:18 PM

Dear Senators,
My name is Ardy Hanson.
I am a fishermen from Cordova of Area E.
I have fished for over 40 years.

I couldn't call in Tuesday, but I am writing today to share my support for HB 33, the Conflict of Interest Bill for Board of Fish.

When a Board of Fisheries member has a conflict of interest, they should still be able to take part in the discussion, just not vote on the issue. People with conflicts often know the fishery inside and out, and that experience can help explain how it affects those on the water and in the region. They should be able to stay at the table, ask and answer questions, talk with ADF&G staff, and share their perspective so the full picture is on the record. Letting them participate in deliberations brings more transparency and leads to better, more informed decisions.

Thank you,
Ardy Hanson

From: [Nicholas Martin](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Cc: [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#);
Senate.Community.And.Regional.Attairs@akleg.gov
Subject: Support HB 33
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 7:23:40 AM

Dear Chair Merrick and Committee Members,

My name is Nick Martin, and I am a commercial fisherman and harvest diver based in Southeast Alaska. I participate directly in Alaska fisheries and make my living on the water, relying on sound, informed fisheries management decisions.

I am writing to express my support for HB 33.

Under current law, Board of Fish and Board of Game members who have direct experience in a fishery are often completely excluded from deliberations due to conflicts of interest—even when they are the most knowledgeable individuals in the room. This has resulted in situations where board members with deep, practical expertise are unable to explain the real-world implications, technical details, or unintended consequences of proposals to the rest of the board.

HB 33 strikes a reasonable and important balance. Allowing conflicted members to participate in discussion—but not vote—improves transparency, strengthens deliberations, and ensures decisions are informed by actual expertise without compromising ethics or fairness.

Good fisheries management depends on accurate information, practical experience, and open discussion. Preventing knowledgeable members from even speaking undermines the quality of decision-making and public confidence in the process. HB 33 corrects that problem while maintaining appropriate safeguards.

I respectfully urge the committee to advance HB 33 and support a more

informed, transparent, and effective board process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Nick Martin

Commercial Fisherman & Harvest Diver

Southeast Alaska

Nick Martin
F/V Keta Bay



From: [Brian Zwick](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Subject: HB33
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 7:49:40 AM

Dear chair Merrick and committee my name is Brian Zwick I currently am a gillnet ,geoduck and sea cucumber fisherman and I am in support of bill HB33 as I feel all information and insight on our fisheries is important and essential on decisions making for all your members.

Thank you.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Dave Thynes](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Cc: [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 8:15:38 AM

Dear Chair Merrick and committee members,

I'm Dave Thynes, a life-long Petersburg resident and Alaskan commercial fisherman. I have participated in many fisheries in Southeast Alaska including salmon driftnet, herring sac roe, dungeness crab, tanner crab, red crab, geoduck dive harvest, sea cucumber dive harvest and halibut and sablefish fisheries.

These fisheries depend on informed management and policy making; I support HB 33 as a measure that will ensure we benefit from all available relevant information while also offering the necessary level of transparency.

Thank you for your hard work and your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Dave Thynes
F/V Nocona
Petersburg, Alaska

From: [Robert Martin](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 8:41:28 AM

Dear Chair Merrick and committee members,

I'm a commercial fisherman from Petersburg and long time member of the Petersburg AC. From my experience on the AC, I can say that the most knowledgeable people on an issue often do have a certain "bias" or point of view and sometimes even technically a conflict of interest. Even so, they are very valuable to the debate and as long as you acknowledge where they are coming from. Please consider this and support HB33 so the process can benefit from their knowledge even though they will not be voting. Thanks!

Bob Martin
Petersburg AK

From: [Raymond May](#)
To: [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Friday, January 30, 2026 1:32:12 PM

Support for HB 33 Board of Fish conflict of interest bill

Senator Merrick, Chair of the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee,

My name is Raymond May, and I am writing to express my strong support for HB 33 Board of Fish conflict of interest bill.

I am a born and raised Alaskan who grew up in Port Lions and I've now lived in Kodiak for over 20 years. I am a proud commercial, personal use, and subsistence fisherman, and an avid hunter and past assistant hunting guide. As an Alutiiq, I am a shareholder of the Afognak Native Corporation and Koniag, and I care deeply about Alaska.

I was raised to not only work for what I have, but also to help feed the elders around me who helped teach me about sustainable harvest and the importance of preserving fish and game for future generations. I am completely dedicated to raising my three children to have the same respect, and I bring them to fisheries meetings whenever I can to help teach them about the process. I've been attending Board of Fish meetings in the various regions that I fish for as long as I can remember, and I have to say that passing HB 33 would make the entire Board of Fish process better. Letting people with knowledge and history of issues deliberate on proposals is just good common sense, and good for the process.

One of the most frustrating things about attending Board of Fish meetings is watching the only person at the board table with any kind of experience in a specific fishery have to sit in the audience during deliberations like they are in trouble for something. Letting knowledgeable board members sit at the big kids table during deliberations is a no-brainer.

Please consider finally passing this critical bill so we can have a more well rounded Board of Fish process, and also recruit additional candidates for the Board of Fish. Right now, there is very little incentive for someone who has financial interests, or their family members have financial interest in a fishery to want to be on the board because they can't share their expertise when it really counts.

Thank you for taking the time and for your service to Alaska. I apologize that I can't testify at this time, since I'm actively fishing in Kodiak.

Raymond May
F/V Resilient
Kodiak, AK 99615



From: [REDACTED]
To: [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: HB 33
Date: Monday, February 2, 2026 7:09:24 AM

To the Senate committee

I did not testify on HB 33 at the first hearing but wish to voice a strong support for the bill. All members on the board have first hand knowledge or great input from concerned individuals.

Bill Connor
po box 1124
Petersburg Ak.

From: [Desi Burrell](#)
To: [Sen. Kelly Merrick](#)
Cc: [Sen. Forrest Dunbar](#); [Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson](#); [Sen. Donny Olson](#); [Sen. Robert Yundt](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: Support of HB33
Date: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:21:51 AM

Dear Chair Merrick and Committee members,
My Name is Steve Burrell and I am a lifetime Alaskan from Petersburg. I have participated in almost every fishery in Alaska in the past 55 years. Right now I am an active Gillnetter in SE Alaska. I support HB33 as a way to provide better information and transparency to improve the process. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Steve Burrell

From: [anthony taiber](#)
To: [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: Yes on HB33
Date: Friday, February 6, 2026 9:36:52 AM

Hello I am a commercial fisherman from Petersburg. I do believe that BOF members with conflict of interest should be allowed to deliberate. Their knowledge and perspectives on fisheries issues remain important even if they cannot vote. Without their input, other members are left uninformed about important nuances regarding fisheries issues. Please vote to allow their participation in the discussions. Thank you.

Anthony Taiber
POB 1861
Petersburg AK 99833