



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

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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