



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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January 24, 2018

Senator Kevin Meyer, Chairman
Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital, Juneau, AK 99801

RE: CSHB 87(FSH) and Board of Fisheries Conflict of Interest

Dear Chairman Meyer and Committee Members,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 34 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. The UFA Board of Directors recently met and would like to address some issues raised concerning HB 87, currently before your committee.

United Fishermen of Alaska 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. In listening to testimony on the House side, it became apparent that Intent Language on what "participation in deliberations" means and why it is important would be necessary moving forward. 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 the right question to the staff. 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 aren't answered because ADF&G doesn't 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.

We have also heard via testimony that a board member may participate in public testimony and participate in the committee process if they have a conflict of interest. Board members who conflict out of deliberations bring valuable information and resources to the discussion that other board member could benefit from. There is a possibility that board members could gain inside knowledge from the recused board member outside of public deliberations.

UFA believes if the board member participated in the deliberations that those discussions would be on record and provide greater transparency to the process.

UFA fully supports HB 87 and recommends that Intent Language or a definition of “participating in deliberations” be adopted on the Senate side as this bill progresses forward.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jerry McCune
President



Frances H. Leach
Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Independent Tendermen's Association • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association
Alaska Trollers Association • Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Armstrong Keta • At-sea Processors Association • Bristol Bay Fishermen's 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 • Golden King Crab Coalition • Groundfish Forum • Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association
Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association • Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture 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 Cook Inlet Drift Association • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters • Valdez Fisheries Development Association