

Calvin Zuelow

From: Rod Arno <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, April 14, 2025 2:43 AM
To: House Resources
Cc: AOC Board
Subject: (H)Res Apr. 14th - Public Comments of Alaska Outdoor Council

House Resources Co-Chairs Rep. Burke and Dibert and Committee members,

The Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) is a conservation organizations who represents thousands of Alaskans who hunt, trap, fish, and recreate on public lands/waters in Alaska. AOC has participated in the Ak Boards of Fisheries and Game regulatory process for decades.

AOC supports Legislative confirmation of;

Allen Barrette - Ak Board of Game
Carri Ann Mueller - Ak Board of Game
Rick Green - Commercial fisheries Entry Commission

The Alaska Outdoor Council opposes the reappointment of Thomas M. Carpenter to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Ak Board of Fisheries member Tom Carpenter purposely avoided having the Board deliberate on the Alaska Outdoor Council Proposal #14 at the Dec. 2024 Prince William Sound (PWS) meeting in Cordova. Proposal #14 asked the Board to close the pollock trawl fishery in Inner PWS until such time as the trawl fleet could assure the state they were keeping their gear off the seafloor. Proposal #14 also asked to stop the bycatch of Chinook salmon in trawl nets in PWS.

By submitting substitute language (RC15) on the following Prop. #15 (out of sync with the board approved agenda) member Carpenter successfully blocked Board deliberations on AOC's proposal to stop trawl gear from contacting the seafloor. Member Carpenter's substitute language did nothing to address the fact that the state is still counting on trawl fleet captains not to scrap the seafloor with their gear. Nor did it address the continued harvest of Chinook salmon as bycatch in PWS by the trawl fleet. Instead member Carpenter's substitute language opened up 2 additional sections of PWS to trawling. Member Carpenter's substitute language was adopted by the Board.

Member Carpenter's action was inconsistent with the Alaska State Constitution, Article 8, Section 2. General Authority as well as state law, AS 16.05.221(a) Boards of Fisheries and Game. The Board of Fisheries may adopt regulations it considers advisable (a) *for the purpose of the conservation and development of the fishery resource of the state there is created the Board of Fisheries.....*

The Alaska Legislature has reemphasized that it's **conservation** first repeatedly in statute, *AS 16.05.251(a)(2) The Board of Fisheries may adopt regulations establishing open and close seasons and areas for the taking of fish if consistent with **resource conservation** and development goals the board may adopt regulations establishing restricted seasons and areas.....*

Unmonitored trawl gear being drug across the seafloor is not in Alaskans best interest now or in the future, it needs stopped. Alaska legislators should not support confirmation to the AK Board of Fisheries of members who undermine conservation. Alaska fish resources are as dependent on an intact habitat on the seafloor as they are of Alaska's river habitats.

As Board member of the PWS Aquaculture Corporation since 2002 Tom Carpenter is well aware of the business of enhancing salmon runs through hatchery releases. Yet he showed no interest in reducing salmon hatchery releases into the North Pacific Ocean by any percentage based on the real possibility that over ranching of enhanced runs of salmon may have anything to do with declining size and stocks of wild Chinook salmon returns to Alaska waters.

While there is plenty of speculation from state and federal fisheries biologist that Chinook salmon are suffering from increased solar heating of North Pacific waters that's only a correlation, not necessarily causation for the declines. Granted the Board of Fisheries has no regulatory authority over the sun, but they do over the numbers of pink and chum salmon being released from hatcheries in Alaska. Closures to salmon harvest, particularly in the Yukon river is having a drastic effect on a number of Alaskan residents way of life. AOC expects that the Ak Board of Fisheries would use every tool under their authority to reverse those declines in salmon returns to western and interior rivers. Member Carpenter has shown no interest in supporting any reduction in salmon hatchery output on the possibility that over ranching of pink and chum salmon may indeed be part of the cause of declining salmon runs in Alaska waters.

The Alaska Outdoor Council does not support legislative confirmation for member Carpenter's reappointment to the Ak Board of Fisheries.

Respectfully,
Rod Arno
Public Policy Director
Alaska Outdoor Council

Sent from Rod Arno's iPhone.