

March 25, 2009

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Representative Bryce Edgmon-Chair House Special Committee on Fisheries  
State Capital, Rm. 416  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Edgmon:

As a life long resident of the Bristol Bay region, an active subsistence, sport, commercial fisherman and former Board of Fish member I support House Bill No. 117 and the accompanying sponsor's intent statement. As the Board of Fisheries considers regulatory changes to each of Alaska's regional fishing areas they need to hear from the area residents, communities and local governments that would be most affected by their decisions. The economic well being of the regional fishing area residents and communities are directly tied to the fishery resources.

It is an unnecessary financial burden to require the people most affected by the Board of Fisheries decisions to travel outside of their region to have their comments and concerns heard when the State of Alaska, by passing HB. 117, requiring the Alaska Board of Fisheries to conduct their regulatory meetings in the affected regions can bring the process closer to them. Requiring these people to travel outside of their region, places the public and open State of Alaska fishery regulatory process beyond their means to participate.

During an earlier time period there were not sufficient funds in the budget to allow the Board of Fisheries to conduct regulatory meetings within all the affected regional areas. Many Alaskan residents requested that sufficient funding be placed in the budget with the understanding that the Board of Fisheries would then conduct these meetings in the affected regions. The State of Alaska responded favorably.

Considering that this is an Alaska Board of Fisheries I never imagined that there would be a need for a bill such as HB.117. This is what has changed my position: 1) Knowing that there doesn't appear to be the lack of funds within the budget, 2) The overwhelming number of regional residents participating in the 2006 Bristol Bay regulatory meeting held in region compared to the 2003 regulatory meeting held in Anchorage, 3) The very positive comments made by then Chairman of the Board of Fisheries Mel Morris on behalf of the Board as to regional support and accommodations the region provided to the Board and the process 4) The Board of Fisheries voting on 2 different occasions to have the Bristol Bay 2009 regulatory meeting in Anchorage. I believe HB.117 is good Alaska policy.

As a past Board of Fishery member I found it extremely helpful to me when we held the regional regulatory meetings within the affected region. I had a better understanding of how the fisheries are managed, history of the fisheries and what impacts proposed regulatory changes could have within the affected region and to the State of Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

*Robert Heyano*

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