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April 9, 2009

Chairman Edgmon, members of the House Fisheries Special Committee,

My name is Paul Shadura, I am the Executive Director of the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association.

This is the Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Associations (KPFA) 55th year representing the setnet fishery within the waters of Cook Inlet. Many changes have taken place over these years but there is one constant that is always clear; if you have healthy returns that are managed for "Maximum Sustained Yield" then there will always be a "harvestable surplus"

KPFA's mission; "Ensuring the Sustainability of Our Fishery Resources" is paramount to remaining a viable setnet fishery and to allow a "reasonable opportunity" of the harvest by all user groups. We do not support the exclusion of any one resource user but strive for a consensus regarding objectives. Promoting an exchange of information and understanding among stakeholders.

KPFA is insistent that the principles of high sustained yield with strong guidelines to maintain environmental standards should be the first rule in CI fisheries management. Managers of both sport and commercial division should formulate different strategies that complement each other not conflict. Departments should actively seek guidance from stakeholders on how best to participate in the fishery resources. They should engage the users to be realistic in their approach to maintain the goals. The public should support reasonable achievable expectations within a fully utilized resource.

It is in the best interest of the state and for resource stability to have open discussions with stakeholders, department personnel and BOF members. Restrictions on the open meeting process from past boards should not and cannot be tolerated. Back room bargaining, interest group coercion of department personnel, closed meetings with board members and the public, ADF&G staff that are instructed to work on proposals for individual board members with secrecy and that are aligned with a single interest group, or individual staff that are advocating for their own interest or a division's goal is not the way to accomplish a fair promulgation of the laws of the state and of the country. Certainly not an open process that basis decisions on principles of equality and mutual respect.

Please review this as a guide to assist your understanding of set net fishers in Cook Inlet. We are a diverse group and strive to arrive at a consensus for most of these proposed regulatory changes. KPFA policy is not to comment on allocative changes that are directed at other set net fishermen within our group. Fishermen are allowed to speak on their own behalf and I am sure you will find that they have no hesitance in doing just that. Note that KPFA refrains from commenting or even submitting negative proposals on other user groups. After this meeting process is done we must all return home and once again live with one another as Alaskan's.

These statements are excerpts from the 2008 Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fish regulatory meeting and as such are on record. As a member of our organization Brent Johnson has always held the public process in high regards. Brent Johnson respects the rights of an individual, please respect his right to be an individual.

KPFA urges you to support the confirmation of Brent G. Johnson on the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

Reference: RC 45, Upper Cook Inlet Board of Fisheries
Spring 2008 membership mail out

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