

**Kenny Bingaman  
Soldotna, Ak. 99669**

***Esteemed Legislators,***

***I am sending this email to you today to ask you not to confirm Robert Ruffner to the Alaska Board of Fish. Mr. Ruffner is not what he seems. I have lived in Alaska and on the Kenai Peninsula for over 40yrs. He and others are giving the impression that he is an “environmentalist”, “habitat specialist”, “resource protectionist” and nothing could be farther from the truth. Of course he has sport fished, of course he has dip netted, but so has most of the commercial fishermen on the Kenai Peninsula.***

***The Kenai Watershed Forum that he is a co-founder of is inundated with commercial fishing interest. it’s board is made up of 54% commercial fishers or people connected to commercial fishing. He has gotten wide support of commercial fishing people from the Kenai Peninsula;***

***Ken Tarbox, 16yrs Soldotna ADF&G Commercial fishing head biologist, who while he was there declared that his department at ADF&G would manage the Kenai River and Cook Inlet for a Commercial fishing priority, John McCombs, East Side Set Netter, Robert Correia, East Side Set Netter, Rep. Sen. Peter Micciche-Soldotna, Cook Inlet Drift Commercial Fisherman, Dwight Kramer, founder of Joe Fisherman Coalition, Soldotna, who’s board of directors is inundated with commercial fishermen. Yesterday Brent Johnson a Kenai Peninsula Borough assembly member got a resolution pushed thru that recommended Robert Ruffner as Chairman of the Board of Fish. Brent Johnson is an East Side Set Net commercial fisherman, who was rejected by the legislature in 2012 as a nominee by then Gov. Parnell because it would have slanted the BOF with a commercial fish majority. The City of Kenai today also sent forth a resolution recommending Robert Ruffner, there are 3 sitting Kenai City Council members that are commercial fishermen.***

***When was the last time you saw commercial fishermen support anyone who is labeled “an environmentalist”, “a habitat specialist”, “a resource protectionist”? My friends, the answer is never. Such people are commercial fishing's worst enemies. In fact Roland Maw was connected to this entity by the past president of KWF, Jim Butler aka Commercial fisherman.***

***There has been 3 studies by the Kenai Watershed Forum to date that have been done to illuminate Kenai River Guides and sport fishing power boats from the Kenai River. All of these studies, (attempts), failed. it all began with;***

*a “Hydrocarbon study” financed and performed by this entity. It directly targeted/blamed the Kenai River Guides 2 stroke outboards for high levels of hydrocarbons and stated that continued guide boat impact would devastate the aqua structure of the river and all of its inhabitants, especially the salmon. They called for an outright ban on all power boats. Fortunately, technology beat them to the punch by the major outboard manufacturers developing and producing 4 stroke outboards that reduced hydrocarbon levels to a non-issue in the Kenai River.*

*Within 2yrs, there was another study conducted. This time it was called a water clarity study in association with a “boat wake” study that involved damage to the Kenai River’s banks by power boat traffic. Immediately guide boats were targeted/blamed as the problem with bank erosion due to the weight of guide boats filled with clients. Not only was a ban on guide boats suggested, but Kenai River State Parks actually limited the number of clients in a guide boat during the month of July to 4 people. Again, guides and the industry corrected the problem quickly by proving that raising the horsepower, which had been set at 35 since 1985 to 50hp, thereby enabling full boats to get on step faster and produce much smaller waves. Raising the horsepower limit made total sense as no manufacture made 35hp outboards for almost 20yrs at that time. Again, technology thwarted the Kenai Watershed Forums accusations. However, Kenai River Guides never again got back to full boat loads of clients that they had had before, the law remains, only 4 clients allowed in a Guide boat during the month of July. A loss in revenue that for them was never regained. The water clarity study did not go away until common sense information to the Kenai Watershed Forum forced its demise. It was noted that on the dates they said the water was at its worst, that large tidal activity which back flowed as far up the Kenai River as mile 16 brought with it the bottom of the river’s mud and churned up waters from commercial fishing boats, from the mouth of the river. The test study area was at river mile 12. Also they were enlightened to the fact that the Kenai River was a glacial fed river with frequent flooding due to rainfall and the Snowy Glacier ice dam which releases large amounts of water on a bi-yearly schedule. It took a while for them to finally understand how flawed their study was and actually fought with us and continued it until rational common sense ended the study.*

*And a look at the list of donors to the Kenai Watershed Forum shows another truth;*

*Ken Tarbox has donated money to the Kenai Watershed Forum. Peter & Erin Micciche, Cook Inlet Drift Commercial fisherman, have donated money to this entity. Robert and Tara Ruffner have donated \$5,000 to the KWF. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife have donated \$25,000. Sheldon and Debbie Ruffner donated a \$1,000. Robert Correia, East Side Set Netter, donated a \$1,000. Paul Dale, Snug Harbor Seafood’s, donated \$1,000. United Cook Inlet Drifters Association, the largest commercial fishing association on the Kenai Peninsula donated \$500. Cook Inlet Keeper donated \$500. Even the State of Alaska donated \$20,000 under the Capital*

*Projects Budget, wonder who in Juneau got that put through,(Chenault whose chief of staff is Tom Wright, who held the same job at United Cook Inlet Drift Association as Roland Maw)? And who is Cook Inlet Keeper?*

### **Cook Inlet Keepers Board**

Benjamin Jackinsky, President **Commercial Fisherman**

Mako Haggerty , vice Pres **Commercial Fisherman**

Mike O Meara **Commercial Fisherman**

Nancy Waiinwright **Commercial Fisherman**

Rob Ernst **Commercial Fisherman**

Tom Evans **Commercial Fisherman**

Willow Kiing **Commercial Fisherman**

Peter Mos **Commercial Fisherman**

Shannyn Moore **Commercial Fisherman**

<http://inletkeeper.org/about/board>

*In closing I would like to say again, please do not confirm Robert Ruffner to the Board of Fish. This seat has always been a sport fishing seat and it should be again to return an equal balance in interest numbers to the Board. 3 Commercial Fishing Seats, 3 Sport Fishing Seats and 1 Subsistence Seat.*

*Thank you for your time,*

*Kenny Bingaman, Kenai Peninsula Resident.*