

**For the Record, my name is Rick Koch and I am the City Manager of Kenai, Alaska.**

**Greetings Chairman Giessel and the Senate Resources Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak before you today.**

**The City of Kenai occupies a unique position in our State as an Alaska Fishing Community.**

**Within our municipal boundaries we are home to a vibrant personal sportfishing community benefitting many Alaskans that are not residents of Kenai. Also within our municipal boundary is a commercially guided sportfishing industry consisting of hundreds of professional guides. During the three week personal use, or dipnet fishery, the shores and waters at the mouth of the Kenai River are filled with as many as 15,000 people in a single day. Subsistence fisheries, such as the**

**Kenaitze Indian Tribe Educational Fishery also take place within the City of Kenai.**

**The City of Kenai was in large part spawned by the robust commercial fisheries of Cook Inlet. We are home port to many commercial fishing boats and five commercial fish processing facilities are located in our City.**

**My intention in telling you this is to impress upon you that all the residents of the City of Kenai, and the surrounding central Peninsula Area, are intimately involved with fishing issues, and have “skin in the game,” regardless of whether they are actively involved in direct fishing activities, or are local business owners.**

**The Kenai City Council unanimously passed Resolution 2015-14 strongly supporting Robert Ruffner’s appointment to the Alaska Board of**

**Fisheries. We respectfully request Legislative confirmation of that appointment.**

**Mr. Ruffner's professional accomplishments as the Executive Director of the Kenai Watershed Forum is impressive. The City has worked with Mr. Ruffner on a number of fishery, and fishery related issues. For example, Mr. Ruffner provided the wisdom, foresight, and leadership to solve a hydrocarbon water-quality issue in the Kenai River. The River had been listed as an impaired waterbody by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency.**

**In two years, the leadership exhibited by Robert, resulted in the Kenai River being removed from the EPA's impaired water-body listing. This required his bringing together for a common purpose, The Kenai Peninsula Borough, the Cities of Soldotna and Kenai, the**

**Kenai River Sportfishing Association, the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, The Alaska ADEC & ADF&G, the Kenai River Special Management Area Advisory Committee, individuals, and other user groups.**

**In my position as city manager I have attended many meetings where a wide range of fishing interests have been represented. These interests have been based in geography, industry and other special interests. Without exception, Mr. Ruffner's goals and interests have been based in what is in the best interest of the resource. He has never been a representative of an industry or specific user group.**

**It is my belief Robert Ruffner is the member of the Alaska Board of Fisheries that the framers of our constitution envisioned when creating**

**the board process, a talented individual who would represent all Alaskans and Alaskan resources.**

**In conclusion, thank you for your time and for your consideration of Mr. Ruffner for a seat on the Alaska Board of Fisheries.**