

February 14, 2017

House Fisheries Committee
Representative Stutes, Chair
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: Support HB 87 Board of Fish Conflict of Interest

Dear Committee Members,

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association supports HB87 that would allow Board of Fish and Board of Game members to deliberate on regulatory proposals, but not vote. We will limit our comments to the Board of Fisheries only. Allowing Board members with expertise in a fishery to deliberate, but not vote, helps the entire Board make more informed decisions.

Before the ethics rules were changed, Board of Fish members were allowed to fully participate in discussions and were less often conflicted out of voting. This bill would not change the process entirely back to this manor, since Board members would still not be allowed to vote on proposals that they have personal or financial interests in. However, they would be able to contribute to the discussions on matters they have the most experience in and help educate the remaining voting members.

We support the definition of 'immediate family member' in this bill that includes only those that live with the member, are financially dependent on them, or distant family members with which they are business partners.

It is our understanding that an amendment to this bill is being considered that would change the Board process from a three-year cycle to a five-year cycle. This was also considered during the December 2015 joint Board of Fish and Board of Game work session. **PVOA supported the proposed change in cycle length and asked that Board Members' terms be lengthened to match the cycle.** Understanding all the fisheries, gear types, and users is a great burden for Board of Fish members, especially new ones. PVOA believes terms that match the cycle length would help the Board maintain members with history of the fisheries and process. Allowing all members to deliberate proposals would be a further aid to new Board Members.

We urge you to pass this bill and allow Board Members that are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by Legislature for their expertise to better contribute to the decisions of the Board. Thank you for considering our comments; we believe this change of participation and conflicts of interest will strengthen the Board of Fish process. We would be happy to answer any questions.

Support HB87
PO Box 232 Petersburg, AK 99833

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association
(907) 772-9323 email: pvoa@gci.net

Petersburg Vessel Owner's Association (PVOA) is composed of over 100 members participating in a wide variety of species and gear type fisheries. An additional 35 businesses supportive to our industry are members. Targeted species include salmon, herring, halibut, sablefish, cod, crab, shrimp, pollock, tuna, geoduck, and sea cucumber.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Megan O'Neil".

Megan O'Neil
Executive Director