



February 13, 2017

Chair Louise Stutes
House Fisheries Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chair Stutes and Members of the House Fisheries Committee,

Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) appreciates this opportunity to express our organizations support for House Bill 87 – an Act relating to participation in matters before the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game by the members of the respective boards; and providing for an effective date.

CDFU is a non-profit membership organization representing over 900 commercial fishing families who participate in commercial fisheries in Alaska's Area E, which includes Prince William Sound, the Copper River region and the northern-central Gulf. It is our mission to preserve, promote and perpetuate the commercial fishing industry in Area E and to further promote safety at sea, legislation, conservation, management and general welfare for the mutual benefit of all our members.

The commercial fishermen of Area E have a strong and historic relationship with the Alaska State Legislature and State of Alaska Departments that we foster with great care, proactive communications and representation. CDFU would like to formally state our strong support for HB 87 and the added measure of flexibility that this policy change would provide to members of the Board of Fisheries and the important processes that this Board engages in and the critical decisions that are made through this forum.

In years past, it has been difficult to gain the full knowledge or experience that Board of Fisheries members espouse due to the ethical limitations placed upon the Board. Although ethical limitations are important, it is imperative that the Board be able to share their input and expertise freely with the public and with other decision makers. Here amongst the fleet members of Area E, there are many leaders who are lifelong Alaskans with decades of invaluable experience, and yet, they would be conflicted out of serving on the Board of Fisheries. This dilemma does a disservice to the important work of the Board of Fisheries which is why we stand behind HB 87.



Additionally, we appreciate the clarification of deliberation proceedings. We believe that this added flexibility will only incentivize knowledgeable and credible leaders to serve in this capacity in the years to come, and will promote a culture of bipartisanship and full consideration at the Board level and beyond.

Thank you, Chair Stutes and Committee, for lending full consideration to the positions of CDFU. We are hopeful that HB 87 will receive your full support and will advance to positive discussions on the floor. Please do not hesitate to reach out to CDFU for comment, support, or with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President of the Board, CDFU

Rachel Kallander
Executive Director, CDFU

CC:

Representative Fansler
Representative Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Tarr
Representative Chenault
Representative Eastman
Representative Neuman