

Sen. Chris Birch

From: edward schmitt <schmitt.edward@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, January 27, 2019 5:37 PM
To: Sen. Chris Birch
Subject: Fish and Game Commissioner Hearing

Jan 27,2019

Senator Birch and members of the Senate Resources Committee

I am writing to express my grave concern for public process and restoring trust in Alaska Government. We already have reason to doubt the Commissioners commitment to open public process based on action we witnessed at the recent Board of Fish Meeting Friday a week ago. Two independent observers took note of what happened when the Board took a surprise vote move the Upper Cook Inlet meeting from Soldotna to Anchorage. While this is a board action that is supposed to be independent of the administration what was noted from the gallery would strongly suggest otherwise. First facts of what happened:

- The issue of meeting location is controversial and has been for a long time
- There was no prior public notice that this was going to be considered
- The first announcement of this action was provided after the sign-up for public comment closed
- The Chairman told public officials from Kenai and Soldotna that no action would be taken on the matter as they left for lunch
- Upon returning from lunch the matter was immediately taken up and voted on

Witnesses reported that after lunch the Dept. Commissioner was seen talking with the Chairman, Board member Ruffner and the Attorney in an animated fashion. While we cannot know what was being discussed, we are confident given the discussion that occurred on the record moments later that it was about the matter of meeting location. We need to know if the commissioner was aware of this action prior to it being brought forward and in either case is this the type of public process and engagement he supports on matters of more serious importance. Secondly is he going to help clean up this mess in the manner that has been suggested by all members of the Kenai Peninsula Delegation.

I would like this letter to be submitted for the record.

Thank you for your consideration,
Edward A Schmitt MD
Chairman Kenai Area Fisherman's Coalition.