

April 9, 2019

Sen. Chris Birch
Chair, Senate Resources Committee
State Capitol Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801
VIA E-MAIL

Re: Chignik Intertribal Coalition Letter of Support for the Reappointment of Israel Payton to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

Dear Senator Birch,

The Chignik Intertribal Coalition wishes to express its support for the reappointment of Israel Payton to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. The Coalition is comprised of the five federally-recognized tribes in the Chignik area – Chignik Bay, Chignik Lagoon, Chignik Lake, Ivanof Bay, and Perryville. The Coalition works to preserve and advance the economic and social interests of its members. Following the failure of the sockeye run in 2018, the Coalition was created in order to advance Chignik area economic interests and assist individuals amidst the fall-out of the 2018 season.

Subsistence fishing is tremendously important to the Coalition. Our stakeholders who can no longer afford to participate in Chignik's commercial fishery, or who are unable to participate due to age or physical limitations, depend upon the Chignik subsistence fishery to meet their nutritional needs. As sockeye returns have diminished in recent years and the amount necessary for subsistence has been reduced, our stakeholders recognize how vitally important the Board's decisions are to the preservation of their customary and traditional ways of life.

Commercial fishing is also an ingrained way of life for the Coalition's stakeholders. Commercial salmon fishing is the sole economic base of every municipality, most businesses, and the majority of the individuals living and working in the Chignik area. The Chignik commercial sockeye fishery is wedged in between two larger mixed-stock fisheries, the Kodiak Area fisheries to the east and South Alaska Peninsula fisheries to the west. Its location makes Board of Fisheries decisions about how to best manage mixed-stock fisheries crucially important to the Coalition's stakeholders.

Chignik stakeholders have participated in the Board of Fisheries process for over forty years. In that time, we have rarely seen as competent and qualified a Board member as Israel Payton. The Coalition believes that his reappointment to the Board of Fisheries is crucially important to the protection of Alaska's fishery resources and urges you to support his reappointment to the Board of Fisheries.

Since his appointment to the Board in 2016, Israel Payton has proven to be an exemplary member of the Board. It is rare that a Board member truly understands the unique needs of different user groups and use areas. He is able to distill the essence of complex scientific concepts into effective management actions. Time and again, Israel Payton has demonstrated an

extraordinary ability to listen to and understand all sides of complicated issues and achieve reasonable and equitable management compromises. He does not arrive at any Board of Fisheries meeting with pre-determined allegiances or goals. Instead, he engages with the public, assesses the evidence provided for the proposals, and deliberates the merits of those proposals with honesty and integrity. All user groups in Alaska benefit from the objectivity, focus, and dedication displayed by Israel Payton.

Fisheries management is one of the most complicated responsibilities of Alaska's government. The Board of Fisheries process is a critical part of the management of our greatest natural resource. Given the importance of this resource, only the best and the brightest Alaskans should serve on the Board. Israel Payton has demonstrated his value in this process. We hope that you recognize his value and reappoint him to the Board of Fisheries so that he can continue serving Alaska in this vital role.

Sincerely,



George Anderson
President, Chignik Intertribal Council

Cc: Representative Bryce Edgmon, Speaker of the House
Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair, House Resources Committee
Representative John Lincoln, Co-Chair, House Resources Committee
Representative Louise Stutes, Chair, House Fisheries Committee