

## **Letter of Opposition to all Board of Fish Appointees**

1. Susan Doherty Southeast Alaska Seiners Association



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Dear Legislators

**RE: Oppose Governor Dunleavy's Board of Fish Appointees**

Governor Dunleavy came to a United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) Board meeting when he was running for office. Board members of UFA expressed their concern about his past zeal to overwhelming support "sport fish" interests and undermine commercial fisheries while he was in the legislature. His reply was, "that he was representing his constituents, and if elected Governor, he would represent all of Alaska."

With his recent announcement of appointees to the Board of Fish (BOF), the Governor has not shown that he is representing all of Alaska, but special interest groups. There is supposed to be balance on the BOF. The slate of appointees the Governor is requesting would heavily UN-BALANCE the BOF. They may be fine people and wonderful dedicated individuals, but there needs to be a balance of expertise and interests on the BOF, and we see this slate as turning that balance upside-down. Just because someone commercial fished as a young adult, does not mean that they have any understanding of today's commercial fishery issues, or more importantly, that their bread is not buttered by entities who are mostly at odds with commercial fisheries.

UFA endorsed only one person for the four seats that are being appointed; an existing Board member, Robert Ruffner, who has demonstrated thoughtful, unbiased, and educated decision making in many contentious and emotionally charged proposals that have come before the BOF in his tenure. Prior to the SE salmon meetings in 2018, Mr. Ruffner went out of his way to attend the SE Seine and Gillnet Task Force meetings and the fall Regional Planning Team (RPT) meeting to better understand SE issues. He met with all the commercial salmon gear groups to get their perspective and understand the complicated SE Alaska Enhanced Salmon Allocation Plan. At the lengthy BOF meeting in Sitka, he worked with all groups to help craft ONE compromise proposal that covered 19 separate proposals that had been submitted by different groups and interests. This is the kind of BOF Board member Alaska needs. The Governor's appointees would seek to replace Mr. Ruffner with Mr. Karl Johnstone. We will not be throwing stones at Mr. Johnstone, you all have well qualified staff that can demonstrate Mr. Johnstone's record on the BOF previously to be quite the opposite of the attributes Mr. Ruffner has exhibited.

Southeast Alaska Seiners Association (SEAS) has been the voice of seine fishermen in SE Alaska for more than 50 years. We have weathered many BOF cycles concerning allocation and sustainable harvest of the fishery resources. Additionally, we have been here from the beginning of the salmon hatcheries, their birth, their success, and their trials. We do not believe this slate of appointees will move any of these areas forward in a positive and productive way for Alaska, and would respectfully ask that you reject this list of candidates.

Sincerely,

Susan Doherty  
Executive Director SEAS