

Betty Tangeman

From: Rebecca OHara <via@krsa.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 15, 2021 10:32 AM
To: Sen. Joshua Revak
Subject: 2021 Board of Fish Nominees

April 15, 2021

Dear Senator Revak,

I live in Anchorage. I would like to see a Board of Fisheries that balances the interests of sport and commercial fisheries.

I'm writing in support of Governor Dunleavy's nominees to the Board of Fisheries: Marit Carlson-Van Dort, John Wood, John Jensen, McKenzie Mitchell, and Abe Williams. As a person who loves to fish in Alaska, it's important to me that the people responsible for managing and allocating fish represent all Alaskans fairly. The Governor's nominees come from diverse backgrounds and have expertise in fisheries across the state. I believe these nominees will serve Alaskans well.

The Governor's nominees are all hard-working Alaskans, and each of them has experience in Alaska's diverse fisheries. I look forward to the balanced and thoughtful perspectives they'll bring to Alaska's fisheries management.

Thank you for your hard work and continued dedication to Alaska. I hope you'll join me in supporting the nominees to the Board of Fisheries and cast your vote to confirm Marit Carlson-Van Dort, John Wood, John Jensen, McKenzie Mitchell, and Abe Williams.

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April 21, 2021

Dear Alaska Legislator:

I write to express my support for the appointment of John Wood, McKenzie Mitchell, and Märit Carlson-Van Dort to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

John Wood has shown himself to be a quick study of complex management issues with a willingness to view issues from an independent point of view. He has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to listen to and understand all sides of complicated issues and achieve reasonable and equitable management compromises. The Board of Fisheries needs intelligent, perceptive, and fair-minded individuals like John Wood.

McKenzie Mitchell has served on the Board since July 1, 2020. Ms. Mitchell's participation in Board matters thus far demonstrates her dedication to doing the work to understand the complex relationships between Alaska's commercial, sport, subsistence, and personal use fisheries. Her background in economics will be of particular use to the Board as it grapples with decisions that have economic impacts for affected user groups.

Since her appointment in 2019, Märit Carlson-Van Dort has demonstrated her ability to weigh all sides of an issue and make hard decisions that are often required of diligent board members. She is accessible and listens well. She understands commercial, subsistence, and sport issues and routinely assesses the impacts of proposals upon all sectors. Her background in commercial fishing combined with her academic training in conservation biology and fisheries science give her a balance that is needed on the Board of Fisheries.

Throughout recent House and Senate committee hearings, Kodiak residents and commercial fishing organizations have attacked Märit Carlson-Van Dort for a decision the Board of Fisheries made at its January 2020 meeting in Kodiak. I'd like to provide some helpful background information about that meeting to illuminate the ridiculousness of the attacks against her.

At the 2020 Board meeting in Kodiak, the Board amended the Cape Igvak Management Plan by allocating Chignik-bound sockeye away from Kodiak fishermen and towards Chignik fishermen. Kodiak fishermen found this deviation from the status quo unacceptable and have blamed Märit for those changes since January 2020.

Generally, Board of Fisheries meetings that deal with Kodiak regulations are held in Kodiak. This gives Kodiak fishermen a tremendous 'home court' advantage. Kodiak fishermen are used to being able to leverage their numbers and their passion to convince the board that there is nothing new to see here – everything is fine – make no changes. For Chignik fishermen at Kodiak meetings it is, and always has been, a hostile environment.

This hostility was palpable at the January 2020 meeting and Märit Carlson-Van Dort was a particular target because of her known roots in the Chignik area. From the very beginning of the meeting Märit had to deal with groundless challenges to her ethics disclosures and personal attacks on her character

and integrity. If simply having 'roots' in a particular community or fishery is sufficient conflict of interest to disqualify someone from serving on the Board of Fisheries, as some Kodiak interests have asserted, then all members, including John Jensen, would have many more conflicts than under the current ethics rules. On multiple occasions the Alaska Department of Law reviewed Märit Carlson-Van Dort's ethics disclosures and determined that she was fully compliant with the Executive Branch Ethics Act and did not have an impermissible conflict of interest with any of the regulatory proposals that she participated in reviewing and adopting.

During the 2020 meeting in Kodiak, the Board considered many factors before amending the Cape Igvak Management Plan. One of these facts was that the Management Plan hadn't been revised since its implementation in 1978. Another fact is that in 1978, the average Chignik fishermen income was nearly triple what the average Kodiak fishermen made. But, by 2020, the tables had turned, and Kodiak fishermen were making more than Chignik fishermen. The Cape Igvak Management Plan was outdated and needed amendment to account for considerable changes that have occurred in the more than 40 years since it was put in place. One of those changes is the fact that Chignik sockeye runs failed to make their minimum escapement for 2 of the last 3 seasons. In order to have a viable sockeye fishery, Chignik fishermen need every sockeye salmon that can make it back to their natal rivers.

You may have heard public testimony from Kodiak fishermen and commercial fishing special interest groups claim they want to 'rebalance' the Board by having someone else confirmed to Märit's seat. They don't want balance. What they want is someone who will reverse the Board's changes to the Cape Igvak Management Plan. You also may have heard public testimony suggesting that Märit came to Kodiak with her mind made up. In fact, at the Kodiak meeting, Representative Louise Stutes submitted a letter to the Board openly accusing it of arriving in Kodiak with a predetermined course of action in mind. It is an understatement to say that Board members were offended by Rep. Stutes's baseless accusations.

Quite simply, Kodiak interests are not able to accept that the Board came to Kodiak with an open mind instead of the standard and expected bias for sticking with the status quo. That they are pouring their frustration and disappointment into a smear campaign against Märit Carlson-Van Dort should be obvious. Do not let their misplaced frustration unseat one of the most qualified Board members in the history of the Board of Fisheries.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Charles McCallum – Retired Chignik Commercial Fisherman
601 N Bragaw Street
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Gale Kristina Vick
Senate District C, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Date: April 12, 2021
To: Alaska Senate Resources, 32nd Legislature
Re: Support for Marit Carlson-Van Dort and McKenzie Mitchell
Alaska Board of Fisheries

I am writing in support for two Alaska Board of Fisheries nominees; Marit Carlson-Van Dort and McKenzie Mitchell.

As a 53 year resident of Alaska, a former commercial fisherman, subsistence, sports and personal use fisherman, a member of the Fairbanks Advisory Committee, and having spent most of my adult life working in fisheries policy and science arenas, I am keenly aware of the balance that we need on the Board of Fisheries. I am also a veteran of decades of Board of Fisheries meetings and I feel that some of the opposition to candidates that we are seeing in testimony is based on years of allocative fish wars and is focusing on the wrong issues.

Allocation wars are normal but the downward spirals in wild stock abundance and size are not. This is a time in Alaska fisheries history when we must have far more science and critical thinking applied to our management decisions than has been routine. There are alarming declines in our wild stocks all over the state, with the current exception of Bristol Bay sockeye. Some of the reasons we know about and can't affect, some we can affect and some we do not yet know about. In the early 1900's, federal biologists had some false theories about salmon spawning and migration, which often resulted in terrible management decisions, but in the end their research and observations resulted in the precautionary principles that we currently have embedded in our Constitution and statutes. This includes economic as well as biological. We are, again, in danger of ignoring our own cautions. Now, more than ever, we need decision makers with sufficient science and economic backgrounds.

Ms. Carlson-Van Dort is not only born and raised in Alaska, with a long family history in subsistence and commercial fishing, but she is the only member of the Board with a degree in conservation biology as well as fisheries science. She is extremely familiar with both the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea fisheries which makes her uniquely positioned to serve as Chair of the Board, a position she currently holds. With the AYK cycle pending, this is especially important.

Ms. Mitchell has an extensive background in sports fisheries and is the only member of the Board with an economics degree. Her expertise will be invaluable in assessing economic considerations of allocations among various sectors.

These two women have already proven themselves to be highly competent and thoughtful Board members. Please confirm both of them.

Thank you. Sincerely, Gale K. Vick