



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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House Resources Committee
House Fisheries Committee

Submitted via Email

RE: Governor's Appointments of Marit Carlson-Van Dort and Curtis Chamberlain to Alaska Board of Fisheries

April 24, 2024

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. UFA **opposes** the re-appointment of Marit Carlson-Van Dort and the appointment of Curtis Chamberlain to the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

The appointment of Chamberlain and Carlson-Van Dort contributes to the continued lack of diversity in geographic representation as well as the lack of scientific expertise on the board. If these appointments were to be confirmed by the legislature, the seven (7) member board will now have two representatives from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta and multiple members residing in the Anchorage/Mat-Su area, while maintaining only one representative from any coastal Alaskan community. With the monumental challenges facing fisheries throughout the state, the ability to understand vital needs of our fishing communities and to interpret the science and research presented by the department – without harming our fishing communities - is key to making decisions in the best interest of our fishery resources and coastal communities.

Marit Carlson-Van Dort has demonstrated lack of comportment and professionalism at multiple fishery meetings held throughout her previous term. At the last Area M cycle meeting Ms. Carlson-Van Dort acted aggressively towards members of the testifying public and was clearly unwilling to listen to, and truly consider opposing views. At the Upper Cook Inlet meeting, Ms. Carlson-Van Dort was observed slamming her hand on the board table, interrupting fellow board members, and engaged in a heated argument with the Commissioner of ADF&G. This reoccurring blatant lack of professionalism and respect for members of the public who come before the board to talk about their reliance on commercial fisheries, and those with whom she serves, makes her a poor choice for the board of fisheries.

UFA opposes the appointment of Curtis Chamberlain based upon his prior testimony at fisheries meetings where he argued that federal management should supplant state management, and his advocacy for somewhat ill-defined co-management of Alaska's fisheries. Further, Mr. Chamberlain is on record opposing Alaska's hatcheries. It is counterproductive to appoint someone to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, which is tasked with setting policy and direction of the management of the state's fishery resources, when that individual has publicly argued against state management.

UFA supports a regionally diverse board, with a membership consisting of diverse opinions, and includes members with knowledge and ability in the field of action of the board. We support a well-rounded board consisting of adequate representation for each sector of Alaska fisheries and expect that every member of the Board will be open to listening to and truly considering every perspective. The appointment of Curtis Chamberlain and Marit Carlson-Van Dort does not achieve those goals.

Respectfully,



Matt Alward
President



Tracy Welch
Executive Director