

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

April 23, 2001

5:12 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Gary Stevens, Co-Chair
Representative Peggy Wilson, Co-Chair
Representative Drew Scalzi
Representative Fred Dyson
Representative John Coghill
Representative Beth Kerttula

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Mary Kapsner

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Board of Fisheries

Russell Nelson - Dillingham
Dr. John White - Bethel

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

RUSSELL NELSON, Appointee
to the Board of Fisheries
PO Box 161
Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

KEVIN HOGAN
PO Box 2228
Homer, Alaska 99603

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the reconfirmation of Dr. White due to its being his third term, and expressed his support for the reconfirmation of Mr. Nelson.

TREFON ANGASAN

(No address provided)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

JUDE HENZLER, Executive Director

Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

725 Christensen Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Mr. Nelson and against the appointment of Dr. White.

BRUCE GABRYS

Fishing Vessel Owners Association;

Member, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council

10299 Baffin Street

Eagle River, Alaska 99577

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson's reconfirmation and against the reconfirmation of Dr. White.

ROBIN SAMUELSEN

PO Box 412

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White's reconfirmations.

HJALMAR OLSON

PO Box 456

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White's appointments.

ROBERT HEYANO

PO Box 1409

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointments of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

TERRY HOEFFERLE

Bristol Bay Native Association

PO Box 310

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White's appointments.

HARVEY SAMUELSON

PO Box 18

Dillingham, Alaska 99576

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

BORIS KOSBURK

(No address provided)

Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White

ROBERT WILLIAMS, President

Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA)

PO Box 206

Kasilof, Alaska 99610

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointment of Dr. White, and noted he supported Mr. Nelson's appointment.

DICK BISHOP

1555 Gus's Grind

Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

DR. JOHN WHITE, Appointee

to the Board of Fisheries

PO Box 190

Bethel, Alaska 99559

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as an appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

JERRY MERRIGAN

Petersburg Vessel Owners Association

PO Box 232

Petersburg, Alaska 99833

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson, and against Dr. White.

JENNIFER HOOPER

Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP);

56 member villages of Southwest Alaska

PO Box 219

Bethel, Alaska 99559

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Dr. White's appointment.

DALE BONDURANT

31864 Moonshine Drive
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

DAVID MARTIN, Chairman
Central Peninsula Advisory Committee
71605 Sterling Highway
Clam Gulch, Alaska 99568

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointments of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

STEVE VANEK

PO Box 103
Ninilchik, Alaska 99639

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointment of Dr. White.

MARK POWELL

46655 A Spur Highway
Kenai, Alaska 99611

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointment of Dr. White.

MARK GLASSMAKER, Secretary and Treasurer
Kenai River Professional Guide Association
PO Box 1316

Sterling, Alaska 99672

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Dr. White's appointment.

RANDY BERG

PO Box 4177
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

ROD BERG

266 Redwood Court
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

STEPHEN RIDDLE

1535 Angler Driver
Kenai, Alaska 99611

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

JOE HARDY

PO Box 3391

Soldotna, Alaska 99669

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmation of Dr. White.

GARY KERNAN

PO Box 642

Kenai, Alaska 99611

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

DREW SPARLIN

(No address provided)

Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointment of Dr. White.

JOE MALATESTA

PO Box 318

Clam Gulch, Alaska 99568

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the reconfirmation of Dr. White.

STAN BLOOM

(No address provided)

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Dr. White and Mr. Nelson.

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR

878 Lynnwood Way

North Pole, Alaska 99705

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Dr. White and Mr. Nelson

PAUL SHADURA II

PO Box 1632

Kenai, Alaska 99611

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against the appointment of Dr. White.

CARL ROSIER, President

Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC)

8298 Garnet Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the reconfirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

ACTION NARRATIVE

DRAFT

TAPE 01-19, SIDE A
Number 0001

CO-CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 5:12 p.m. Representatives Scalzi, Dyson, Coghill, Kerttula, Wilson, and Stevens were present at the call to order.

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Board of Fisheries

CO-CHAIR STEVENS announced that the committee would be hearing the confirmations for Russell Nelson of Dillingham and John White of Bethel for the Board of Fisheries. He said the goal was to move the hearings forward to the speaker [of the House] for consideration by the full legislature.

Number 0128

RUSSELL NELSON, Appointee to the Board of Fisheries, testified via teleconference:

I would like to express my desire to serve another term on the Board of [Fisheries]. During the past three years, I've worked hard to understand the issues of all the fisheries around the state of Alaska, and make fair decisions for the conservation and development of these fisheries. Two policies that the Board of [Fisheries] during the last two years that I support are the sustainable fisheries policy and the committee process. The sustainable fisheries policy ensures that the Alaska Department of Fish & Game and Board of [Fisheries] are proactive in preserving our fishery resources and into the future, while the committee process helps to give the public and the Board of [Fisheries] committee members a more interactive method of solving contingent proposals that come before the board. And that's all I have.

Number 0243

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON asked how long he has lived in Bristol Bay.

MR. NELSON replied that he has lived in Bristol Bay since he was born in 1956.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON inquired as to what years he fished in Bristol Bay.

MR. NELSON said he fished in the 70s and into the 80s.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON asked if he mostly fished the Nushagak [River].

MR. NELSON said yes, but he has also fished the Kvichak, [Nushagak], fished for herring in Kodiak, gillnetted herring, fished on a seiner, and has spotted for gillnetters and seiners. After fishing onboard the boats, he spotted for salmon until the Board of Fisheries chose not to have spotters for Bristol Bay salmon. He remarked that he supports the Board of Fisheries' decision on this matter.

Number 0525

KEVIN HOGAN testified via teleconference that he was here to comment on Dr. White's appointment. However, he said he endorses the appointment of Mr. Nelson.

Number 0533

TREFON ANGASAN testified via teleconference. He said he was a commercial fisherman and former member on the Board of Fisheries. He said he supports Mr. Nelson for the same reasons that he [Mr. Nelson] gave. He thinks he is an effective board member and that conservation has been his forte. This needs to be continued, especially the board's sustainable fisheries policy, which is important for the future.

MR. ANGASAN remarked that he also wanted to testify in support of Dr. White for the same reasons that Mr. Nelson has discussed in terms of being an effective board member. He said that Dr. White has probably maintained the same kind of philosophy [as Mr. Nelson] on the Board of Fisheries. Mr. Angasan mentioned that while serving on the Board of Fisheries with Dr. White, he began to introduce the concept of sustainable fisheries. He

said this will probably be what is going to save "all of us in the future."

MR. ANGASAN stated that he is a commercial fisherman and has suffered the radical swings in the fishery like all Alaska fishermen have. So, he recognizes the value of having a comprehensive recovery plan that would allow "us" to plan into the future. If these programs do not exist, and "we" don't have board members like Mr. Nelson and Dr. White who are conservation oriented, "I think we may as well start advocating for fish farms," he said.

MR. ANGASAN remarked that this is not the way "we" want to go. He said there is still hope in the fishery and that it's important to keep continuity. He went on to say:

Right now we're going through a major swing in the fishery, and if you shift horses in the middle of the stream, I think we wouldn't ... give the opportunity for the Board [of Fisheries] to see through the things that they've done in ... the last year to try to get this fishery back on its feet.

MR. ANGASAN stated that AYK [Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim] has never had a solid fishery and Bristol Bay does not get "minimum escapement." He indicated that it was important for Mr. Nelson and Dr. White to remain on the Board of Fisheries to see this. They have "been there when the fishing was good and they're trying to bring it back," he concluded.

Number 0805

JUDE HENZLER, Executive Director, Bering Sea Fishermen's Association, testified via teleconference that he wanted to "second" what Mr. Angasan said. He said:

Our fishermen and women really need some kind of help, and we think that [Dr.] White and [Mr.] Russell are people that can do it. [We've] got a calamity in our streams in Western Alaska. Thank You.

Number 0885

BRUCE GABRYS, Fishing Vessel Owners Association; Member, Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council, testified via teleconference that he agrees with Mr. Nelson's second term of appointment to the Board of Fisheries. However, he has some

concerns about Dr. White's appointment regarding "stacking terms to third terms." He went on to say:

We're talking about nine years for the same individual on the Board [of Fisheries], and these boards are set up as lay boards, not as professional boards. If the state chooses to go to a professional board, perhaps maybe we should move in that direction. And the Board of [Fisheries] is a tough job and it takes a lot of patience and it takes a lot of cooperation by different members. In the case of Dr. White, I think he needs to be a little bit more considerate of the public when they testify. He seems to have a problem with allowing people to finish when they have an idea that perhaps is somewhat different than his own.

Number 0943

ROBIN SAMUELSON testified via teleconference that he was in support of Mr. Nelson. He said:

I think he's demonstrated throughout the state of Alaska that he is a good (indisc.) of resource. He has followed the state mandate by putting fish first, [and is] very conservation minded. He supports subsistence and its priority afforded by you folks and [the] legislature. Russell [Nelson] also brings a unique perspective to the Board [of Fisheries]. He's not only commercial fish[ed], but he's also a land manager for the village corporation here that has a lot of interaction with the sports fish community. And I think through Russell's efforts, he has been able to erode the friction to some degree between the commercial and sports fishermen on the Nushagak River. ... But he's represented the state very well not only for his own district, which is Bristol Bay, but the rest of the state of Alaska. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Number 1037

HJALAMAR OLSON testified via teleconference and thanked the committee for giving "us" the opportunity to state "our" support for the reappointment of these board members. He said he supports the second-term appointment of Mr. Nelson. He remarked that Mr. Nelson did well in his first term representing the interests of Bristol Bay fishermen. Mr. Olson mentioned that he has fished all his life, for over 50 years. He stated, it is

"amazing how fast Russell [came] up to speed on other statewide fisheries."

Number 1088

ROBERT HEYANO testified via teleconference that he is in support of Mr. Nelson. He said he has done an excellent job in his first three years. In his opinion, one's first term is basically a learning curve. He said, "You've got various fisheries not only in salt water, but fresh water. It takes a lot of time and (indisc.) to get up to speed." He remarked that Mr. Nelson was "extremely accessible" during meetings and when they were not in session. He also said he did an excellent job in making the difficult calls to protect the resources.

Number 1161

TERRY HOEFFERLE, Bristol Bay Native Association, testified via teleconference that the association has about 6,000 members throughout the villages of Bristol Bay. About 56 percent of the [members'] households in Bristol Bay mostly live from the fishing industry. He remarked that he couldn't think of any appointments more important to the Bristol Bay Native Association than these Board of Fisheries appointments. He said he endorses the nominations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White. He has watched Mr. Nelson work for the past several years and Dr. White work for several terms. He stated that they are unselfish and provide unflagging service to the people of the state. He indicated that their dedication to conservation of resources is an inspiration to him. He said, "They both epitomize the concept of public service." He went on to say:

I would like to speak particularly on behalf of Dr. White's appointment. I've known Dr. White for 30 years, ... and I understand that he may have some people speaking against his candidacy here this afternoon, and I just have to say that Dr. White has a keen intelligence and a fine understanding of the science of fisheries management. ... I think that his presence on the Board [of Fisheries] is very important to us at this time for a number of reasons. One is that as a health care administrator as well as a tooth puller, I think that Dr. White has got a fine understanding ... that science is statistics. And I think that he can talk "chi square" analysis and regression analysis along with the best of the scientists that the department has working for it.

And I think that kind of an understanding and the ability to (indisc.) to ask challenging questions to the department scientific staff is particularly important. And I think that that's a key role that Dr. White plays on the Board [of Fisheries]. I think that with the ... critical situation in our fisheries right now, the failure of spawning streams and whole river drainages, I think that the importance of talking about comprehensive recovery plans and sustainable fisheries, which has been a key element of Dr. White's incumbency on the board, is critically important to us now. And I would urge you to reappoint him to the Board [of Fisheries]. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Number 1406

HARVEY SAMUELSEN testified via teleconference. He said he has lived in Bristol Bay "forever." He indicated that the current tough times in the fisheries remind him of times in the 1950s, when there were poor fishing seasons. He said, "We used to go on strikes all the time to get spawners up to the lakes." He stated that Mr. Nelson and Dr. White have intelligence, listen to people, and are "down to the fisherman level." They are not bureaucratic, and they listen to the "common folk right from the ground up." He stated that he would like both to be reappointed to the Board of Fisheries.

Number 1567

BORIS KOSBURK testified via teleconference that he knows Dr. White and Mr. Nelson. He indicated that he went before the Board [of Fisheries] a few years ago due to a situation that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. It came to a point where he had to go back before the Board of Fisheries to try to "get our resources filled up again." He said the support he received from Dr. White was "unbelievable." He also mentioned that Mr. Nelson is well known and understands "our" problems. He stated that the village of Perryville supports Dr. White and Mr. Nelson's appointments to the Board of Fisheries.

Number 1667

ROBERT WILLIAMS, President, Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association, commented that he was here to speak on Dr. White's

confirmation hearing. However, he supports the appointment of Mr. Nelson.

Number 1672

DICK BISHOP testified that he lives in Fairbanks and fishes for salmon and whitefish for subsistence and personal use. He mentioned that he has a limited entry permit for the Tanana River. He stated that he has a strong and long-time interest in the fisheries of the state, principally for personal use. He wanted to testify because he believes the governor's justification for reappointing Mr. Nelson and Dr. White, "an emphasis in experience and continuity," was the right way to go.

MR. BISHOP commented that these factors have been extremely important in his experience with the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game. He mentioned that he worked for the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) for over 20 years as a wildlife biologist and administrator. He noted that a couple of people have been on the "board" for a long time. For example, Sydney Huntington (ph) "an outstanding board member" put in 20 years; Sam Harbo (ph) served 10-15 years; and Jim Reardon (ph) served over ten years on the Board [of Game]. He said this was a very effective Board [of Game]. He indicated that the way the governor chose this particular Board of Game is how he chose appointments to the Board of Fisheries.

MR. BISHOP stated that he is in support of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White because he believes they have done a really good job on the Board of Fisheries. His perception was that "they are not provincial or territorial, [and] that their interests have run across the state in terms foremost of sound resource conservation and their allocation."

Number 1821

MR. NELSON thanked the people who have supported him.

Number 1870

JOHN WHITE, D.D.S., Appointee to the Board of Fisheries, testified via teleconference. He referred to his earlier testimony at the House Resources Standing Committee and reiterated his reasons for wanting to continue to serve on the Board of Fisheries. First, he wants to see the sustainable fisheries policy through to its maturity in order to "entertain other regulatory processes" that have begun in other parts of

the state. He also hopes for the first time to establish a constructive link between the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission (NAPFC), in which he is currently an advisor, and the Board of Fisheries. He hopes to also have an interlocking relationship between those parties and the "North Pacific Council on Salmon Research that's so critically needed throughout the state." He said it is especially needed in Western Alaska. He went on to say:

We have river systems on their knees from the Kvichak to the headwaters of the Yukon River in Canada. So, we have critical conservation concerns on the Kuskokwim River, Yukon River and Norton Sound, Kvichak River, and Bristol Bay. And I would like to be able to serve again to be available to interact on issues that will come up concerning those conservation crises on our rivers at this time. That's all I have, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for your time.

Number 1978

REPRESENTATIVE SCALZI referred to areas such as Cook Inlet and southeast Cordova, which are experiencing a growth in the conflict of sports use and commercial use. He said dense populations often inflict pressure on the Board [of Fisheries] to reallocate. He asked what Dr. White's vision is for commercial fisheries in these areas where there are high-density populations. He asked if there is a plan he would like to see implemented statewide that would "secure commercial fisheries in these hot spots," or if he is in "favor of dissolving some of these areas and letting it go to sport."

Number 2056

DR. WHITE said "absolutely not." He remarked that he would be happy to work with Representative Scalzi for the next three years to ensure that community and economic development planning not be done in front of the Board of Fisheries. He believes that commercial fishing and sports fishing communities need to resolve these problems "at home and not make them allocation win/lose battles before this Board [of Fisheries]."

DR. WHITE indicated that the last time he met with people about the Kenai Peninsula, he told them that the "grave error" that has been going on for too long is that people are doing economic development around fish allocation. He believes communities

have to decide what they want. They "need to sit down, neighbor-to-neighbor, with people and try to find stabilizations in all sectors of the community," he said. The primary concern should be the stabilization of the communities and the economic well-being of the different sectors, whether sport or commercial. [Communities] should try to have some long-term economic development planning that stabilizes these things, "so that we do not continue to do economic development in front of the Board of Fisheries around allocation." He said, "I hope that's direct enough, sir. I feel that passionately."

REPRESENTATIVE SCALZI remarked that he concurred. He referred to a Board of Fisheries position which opposes the IFQ [Individual Fishing Quota] plan for charters; he mentioned the North Pacific [Fishery] Management Council. He noted that he had reservations about this as well. However, he asked Dr. White if he sees a problem with the uncurtailed growth in that industry and if he has a solution, since this will be discussed in the Local Area Management Plans (LAMP) process that will be going on with the Board of Fisheries and North Pacific [Fishery] Management Council.

DR. WHITE stated he thinks this answer is "ditto," because it goes along with his answer to the previous question [regarding sports fishing versus commercial fishing]. He commented that he would have liked to see the LAMP and hear the public, and for that decision to have occurred after that. He went on to say, "we're going to go out, we're going to take testimony, [and] I'm going to continue to keep an open mind about all this." He remarked that in the future, "we got to get people to the table." Afterwards, if there is a better way to do this, "we have to get it back in front of the regulatory boss."

Number 2222

MR. HOGAN testified via teleconference and thanked Dr. White for his service. However, he expressed concern about the length of time he has been on the Board of Fisheries. Another reappointment would bring his service to almost ten years. He remarked that as much as the board needs continuity and experience, he thinks it also needs "fresh blood." He would like to see the governor appoint someone who represents the processors or someone who is from (indisc.), since lately these regions have been underrepresented. He noted that Dr. White has "done a fine job and we appreciate his service." But, it's also time for some "new blood."

JERRY MERRIGAN, Petersburg Vessel Owners Association, testified via teleconference that he has been going to Board of Fisheries meetings for a long time, and has seen various boards and chairmen. He noted that at times he disagrees with both Mr. Nelson and Dr. White. But he supports Mr. Nelson because he feels that he listens to him. He stated that originally he thought this about Dr. White, but not anymore.

MR. MERRIGAN urged the committee to oppose the confirmation of Dr. White, on behalf of the Petersburg Vessel Association. He said he appreciates his service of three terms. However, they believe that two terms are enough and a time for change is long overdue. "We" also think commercial fishing is underrepresented on the Board of Fisheries. Real fishermen are needed, "people that actually make some money doing this and actually participate on the ocean," he said. He went on to say:

We think the Board of [Fisheries] is heavily skewed towards terminal and in river fishery. We think the Board of [Fisheries] has been lacking some geographic balance that you heard about. Internally, there's three representatives representing Western Alaska fisheries (Bethel, Dillingham, and Upper Yukon)....

Southeast [Alaska] has had but one seat for ten years, while Kodiak and Prince William Sound [have] held no seats for the same duration. Alaska Peninsula has not [had] a seat on the Board of [Fisheries] in six years.

We think that two terms is enough. One of the telling signs is when people have been serving too long on a public board is when they decide maybe they don't need the public anymore. This is kind of evident in the recent turn of events in regards to the Board of [Fisheries] coming to a position on how to charter IFQs without the benefit of a public meeting or public input or public notice. ... I reference the March 28 letter from Mr. Chairman Dan Coffey to North Pacific [Fishery Management] Council. I haven't seen any board members but one descend from that position. ... So I assume everybody else is onboard. But we believe this contradicts public process, and that's a sign that things need to change.

We've also been in opposition of Dr. White in terms of the hatchery chum issue which was tabled indefinitely with the Board of [Fisheries]. It seems like it first came up in '97, and it then came up in '99 and was tabled and finally was voted down to no action to January 2001 [at the] Board of [Fisheries] meeting. Board of [Fisheries] standing rules said "take no action," [which] has the effect of killing [a] proposal. There are two reasons for taking no action. Number one is [they] found proposals beyond the board's authority. We had to attend many, many, many meetings beyond what was reasonable. It was very clear the Board [of Fisheries] did not have the authority, and that's what the boards themselves concluded two [to] three years after the date.

Another Board of [Fisheries] standing rule [is] do not change or reverse the intent of a proposal or an issue. At the January Board of [Fisheries] meeting, I watched Dr. White take a proposal establishing a gillnet herring fishery in Dutch Harbor and add a punitive overage pay back policy in regards to a (indisc.) fishery. I was on a receiving end of what constitutes practical public notice. I see a 180-degree turn from what was expressed at a March 2000 meeting in regard to an ADAC (ph) issue and what I saw at the January 2001 Board of [Fisheries] meeting.

MR. MERRIGAN indicated that he was not sure what he thought of the sustainable fisheries policy, since he sees it as "an ever-maturing doctrine" that will never be completed. Therefore, he is not sure how keeping a board member until this policy is carried through is possible. He said, "It's a very broadly written document" that reads like the Pacific Salmon Treaty. He mentioned that other people could carry this task out, and that it is time for some "fresh air" on the Board of Fisheries. He asked the committee to commend Dr. White on his service, but not to reconfirm him.

Number 2495

JENNIFER HOOPER, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP), speaking on behalf of its 56 member villages of Southwest Alaska, testified via teleconference:

I'm here to ask that Dr. White be reappointed to this board. He has tremendous expertise and knowledge in

all of the fisheries. And all the people who have commented before - talking about time for fresh air, new blood, the disasters that we've seen - regardless of what the cause is, Dr. White has been involved since their beginning. Since they started he has seen what has happened. He has worked accordingly, and I think it is the absolute worst time to bring in somebody new, ... regardless of their expertise and knowledge.

I think Dr. White has shown he is very fair. He has respect for all people that attend the Board of [Fisheries] meeting, and I think he does listen to everybody who approaches him. I've witnessed ... many Board of [Fisheries] meetings and the way Dr. White works, and I think he's very fair. And like I said, he has respect for everybody, no matter what background or fishery or village or race they come from. And I just want to stress it is not the time to bring in somebody new, going against the expertise that Dr. White has and the knowledge and [what] he has seen happen the last five-plus years. So I think Dr. White, as AVCP does, urges you to reappoint him to the Board of [Fisheries] and keep him involved. He's been working for everybody. Thank you.

Number 2603

DALE BONDURANT testified via teleconference that he supports Mr. Nelson's appointment because he has done a good job and works well with the Board of Fisheries. He stated that he has known Dr. White since he served as a chairman on the Board [of Fisheries]. He said, "He is able to handle volatile situations." He indicated that an area in Soldotna has had harassment and threatening situations, which Dr. White handled with much "rapport and respectability." He stated that he has a very broad knowledge of the state fisheries. He went on to say:

Present membership is a very sharp scientific mind. I want to say something about commercial fisheries that oppose him. I've been involved in the fisheries hearings for probably 40 years, and I've noticed, as the board gets more mature, they start thinking more about the resource, and then the commercial fishermen want to get their financial (indisc.) and try to get rid of those people that now support such things as [the] sustained fishery policy. So, we do need people

that [have] been there awhile. And we need people that will stand up for the resource.

I've seen some of the old-timers like Nick Zabone (ph) [and] Gordon Jenson (ph), and ... as soon as they found out why the commercial fishermen were wanting this and that, boy, they got rid of them too. So I say more power to people that have served on this board a long time and now are turned around. They want to protect the resource. And I also support the committee process. I think it's the way to get the people into ... working together. So, I appreciate Dr. White's responsibility with the board and fully support [him]. Thank you.

Number 2774

DAVID MARTIN, Chairman, Central Peninsula Advisory Committee, testified via teleconference that the committee is located in the Ninilchik area of Cook Inlet on the Kenai Peninsula. He read the following testimony:

[At] our April 4, 2001 public meeting, our advisory committee unanimously opposed the confirmation of Dr. John White and Russell Nelson for another term on the Board of [Fisheries]. Our justification and reasons are as follows:

Dr. White has already served two terms. The Board of [Fisheries] does not listen to the public advisory committees, ADF&G, ... or the biological data presented to them. The Board of [Fisheries] has met for seven straight years since 1994, sometimes two or three times a year on Cook Inlet issues. Dr. White was chairman for some of these years. These meetings were scheduled contrary to agenda-change criteria by either the Board of [Fisheries] themselves or the Board of [Fisheries'] approval of an agenda-change request for allocation purposes. These resulted in ... unnecessary and undue burdens in time and money on advisory committees, users of the resource, the public, ADF&G, ... and the board-support section of the Board [of Fisheries] themselves.

The three-year cycle was implemented to decrease the burden of time and cost on the public. The Board of [Fisheries] was created to stabilize the fisheries.

Mr. White and Mr. Nelson have been instrumental in restructuring Cook Inlet salmon management plans. These management plans place regulatory closures on the fisheries. These plans strip the professional management biologists of their flexibility in the (indisc.) authority to manage the fisheries biologically. This is exactly what Alaska had before statehood when the federal government managed our fisheries. These management plans that result in lost harvest of surplus salmon gross over escapement; that has led to diminished returns. In 2000 alone, 20 million pinks went unharvested because these same plans eliminated any commercial harvest. The wasted harvest occurred even with the event of the Cook Inlet fisheries being declared a disaster by the federal government.

Many people in our area are financially and mentally depressed. Their livelihood and everything they worked for is being regulated away. Many, because of age and other reasons, have no other alternative. They are also losing their fishing industry infrastructure and many jobs. But the majority of the major canneries have left the inlet, stating ... the reasons for leaving as being an unstable business environment created by the Board of [Fisheries]. [Dr.] White and Mr. Nelson have approved several out-of-cycle agenda-change requests for Cook Inlet and one for Prince William Sound for conservation concerns, even though the department and the data showed that there were no conservation concerns. That resulted in ... Cook Inlet of (indisc.) restrictions through the commercial fisheries, the sport end of the charter industry on the silvers, and the result was the 2000 season came in at ... near-record runs of silvers that went unharvested.

[With] respect to the time that Dr. White and Mr. Nelson have put on the Board of [Fisheries], they have had their opportunity to regulate Alaska's fisheries. However, it is time to move on and confirm new Board of [Fisheries] members. We need to confirm people who are good stewards of the fisheries resource by implementing regulations that manage Alaska's fisheries biologically, that listen to the biologists, and adhere to scientific data. We need to confirm and listen to the advisory committees and the public to

bring stability and [reliability] to the fisheries. Alaska's renewable salmon resources are too viable and depended upon by too many people for their livelihood to be managed in any other way. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Number 2910

STEVE VANEK testified via teleconference:

I've been a commercial fisherman for 34 years. I oppose Dr. White's confirmation. No one should have three terms. No one is so indispensable that the two-term policy should be set aside. He has cost the State of Alaska hundreds of thousands of dollars and myself hundreds of dollars by taking up Cook Inlet every year out of cycle. I'm going to give you an example of the costs of the [Alaska] Department of Fish & Game from just one of these out-of-cycle meetings.

Here is a list of department personnel that had to work on the useless coho management plan during the winter of 1999-2000: Mike Bethey (ph), Jeff Fox, Dave Ruse (ph), Paul Sear (ph), Nicky Sarza (ph), Linda Branningan (ph), Craig Whitmore , Steven Free (ph), Robert Clark (ph), Robert Latford (ph), Jean Sandin (ph), and James Hasbrook (ph). These are all people listed on the report that they had to make to the Board of [Fisheries] for that coho management plan last spring. And if you don't think that cost a lot of time and money for the department personnel, you could add up their time that they spent and see. The "coho man," he does not need to be honored with a third term. The Cook Inlet economy has suffered enough under Dr. White. Anyone can always claim that they're needed to finish their programs. And that is a very weak argument. There are other people who are just as qualified and have the ability to do it. So you don't need to have a third term. Thank you.

Number 3000

MARK POWELL testified via teleconference that he has owned and operated a salmon buying company in Cook Inlet for 18 years.

TAPE 01-19, SIDE B

MR. POWELL gave the following testimony:

[Dr. White] along with Mr. Coffey's leadership have showed an orchestrated plan to restrict the commercial fishery in Cook Inlet to the point that it's almost impossible for the fishery to continue. Ever-increasing escapement levels in poor in-river management have caused drastic reductions in the sockeye return in Cook Inlet and therefore drastic reductions in the harvest ability of the commercial fishery in this area. The sitting Board of Fisheries, in my view, is directly responsible for implementing poor management decisions on the local biologists that have caused a drastic reduction in the commercial harvest.

The processing industry has lost considerable capacity to date due to the closure of several plants in this area. The Board of [Fisheries] needs to have equal representation in order to decide issues fairly. In my view, Dr. White needs to be replaced. And I would agree with the statement that two terms is enough on the Board of [Fisheries]. ... That's all I have to say, and I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

Number 2946

MARK GLASSMAKER, Secretary and Treasurer, Kenai River Professional Guide Association, testified via teleconference:

I'd like to pledge my support for the reconfirmation of Dr. White to the Alaska Board of Fisheries. Due to his conservative experience and balanced viewpoint stemming from his past Board of [Fisheries] experience, he has shown an innate ability to represent both sports fish and commercial interests, and his reappointment will benefit Southcentral [Alaska] and statewide fisheries. On behalf of the Kenai River Professional Guide Association, I would like to pledge support for Dr. John White and his continued public service to Alaska's Board of [Fisheries]. Thank you very much.

Number 2884

RANDY BERG testified via teleconference:

I'm here to support the reconfirmation of both Mr. Nelson and Dr. White to the Board of Fisheries. The main reason I'm supporting the two is because of their stance on fisheries resource itself. ... Although they helped to cut my sports fishing season and bag limit drastically here on the Kenai River last year, I feel the concern (indisc.) and salmon resource in the state of Alaska.

And during their hard work on the Board of Fisheries and protecting the silver salmon run escapements in the Cook Inlet, the state of Alaska avoided disaster in silver salmon spawning escapement last year. And I just think with their hard work and their conservation efforts for the salmon stocks that we have in the state that in the future we can see better runs coming along, instead of the disaster we've been seeing in the last few years. Thank you very much.

Number 2863

ROD BERG testified via teleconference that he lives in Soldotna. He remarked that the reconfirmation of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White is the "right things to do." He said:

When it comes to burden of conservation, they're willing to spread that out amongst the user groups, instead of one group always taking it in the shorts. So I am here, and I am in favor of the reconfirmation of Russell Nelson and Dr. John White.

Number 2831

STEPHEN RIDDLE testified via teleconference that he has been around this fishery for 17-18 years. He noted that he has seen different things on the [Kenai] Peninsula, but that growth is a constant for the Kenai Peninsula and Alaska. He said there is a constant growth of people who want to make a living off of these fish. He remarked that he supports Dr. White and Mr. Nelson because of their concern for the "conservation of that resource." He mentioned that he and his children and ten grandchildren are all concerned about the conservation of these fish for the future.

MR. RIDDLE stated that it's about time that "we" realize both sports fishermen and commercial fishermen can't all "make a

living off these fish." It's not going to happen, he said, because there are too many of "us". The sports fishing and commercial fishing industries are overcapitalized. He said:

There's too much money, too many boats, too many processors, [and] too many guides, and let's face it, folks, we're not gonna restrict the number of people that come in the state, because it's not Russia. So [we've] got to restrict something, and all of us have to bear the brunt and take a little bit of a hit and give the fish a break.

MR. RIDDLE remarked that he thought Mr. Nelson and Dr. White were the most concerned Board of Fisheries members in regard to the longevity of these fisheries. He urged the committee to reconfirm Mr. Nelson and Dr. White.

Number 2723

JOE HARDY testified via teleconference that he supports the reappointment of Dr. White. He said Dr. White has been a "force for balance management and conservation." He went on to say that Dr. White's views have helped him achieve a "balance of (indisc.) or allocation between sport, commercial and conservation demands." He pointed out that the "sports-commercial mix" includes subsistence and personal use fisheries. He went on to say:

While this approach definitely has not pleased all users, he has been effective. The Board [of Fisheries] needs his level of experience and commitment to continue managing the resources in a fair and equitable manner. I don't feel that Dr. White should be targeted for the (indisc.) or lack of salmon run in Cook Inlet. Nature will decide that, with proper management.

MR. HARDY stated that Dr. White has been an effective proponent of protecting these runs in Cook Inlet and statewide.

Number 2677

GARY KERNAN testified via teleconference that he has done commercial and sports fishing his whole life. He expressed his support for the reconfirmations of Dr. White and Mr. Nelson. He remarked that it seems like "such a turmoil ... trying to figure out what the major problem is." He stated that he

believes Dr. White and Mr. Nelson support all fisheries, not just sockeye salmon fisheries. He indicated that he has fished commercially when the prices were different for the same amount of fish that he had at another time, which is "like when you have a bad season that has to go towards the Board of Fisheries." He said, "We have lots of bad seasons on the river, so I'm just trying to see the outlook for all the fisheries, not just for the sockeyes."

Number 2627

DREW SPARLIN testified via teleconference that he has resided in Kenai for 40 years and has been a commercial drift fisherman in Cook Inlet for 37 years. He stated that he has been very active in fish politics by participating in all the Board of Fisheries meetings that have dealt with Cook Inlet, for the past 25 years. He declared that he was testifying against the appointment of Dr. White. He referred to written testimony that he had sent to the House Special Committee on Fisheries and House Resources Standing Committee and said that [Dr. White] "brought to life the surplus and excessive waste of pinks this year."

MR. SPARLIN brought attention to the Avalanche meeting, which was the meeting on the coho management plan. He noted that this meeting was the result of a letter submitted by the governor and that the Board [of Fisheries] workshop in Fairbanks had said that if this letter was submitted by anyone else, it would not have been considered. He explained that the coho management plan was "supposedly" adopted due to conservation concerns. However, ADF&G made the statement that there were no conservation concerns, while the Board [of Fisheries] determined that there were. This resulted in the fisheries being reallocated with no "sunset clause" on the action taken or methods to count the cohos that went into the river systems. He said:

[The Board of Fisheries] reduced the bag limit with potential increase in the bag limit and the river. This was a direct reallocation, and it left no opportunity whatsoever for the management people to institute a commercial harvest whenever the species and the strength and abundance of stock would require it and be safe to do. ... I surely hope that you will not reappoint Dr. White, and I would hope that we would find another good citizen of the state of Alaska to take his turn of making these decisions. Thank you very much.

Number 2516

JOE MALATESTA testified via teleconference:

I want to oppose Dr. White so much that I would like to spend an hour telling you of all the things I've watched him do. I've heard a lot of people testify about their 17 and 18 years. I've been in and out of this state since the '50s. My wife was raised here. [I] fished down here, and I attend all the Board [of Fisheries] hearings. The last Board [of Fisheries] hearing we had in Soldotna, I brought two elderly women ... [who were] six generations deep in commercial fishing. And Dr. White was arrogant with Mr. Coffey [Board of Fisheries Chair], and he was nasty towards people when they were speaking, especially the young people.

And I'll tell you something: when it comes to the pink salmon disaster that we had last year, he should be arrested for the wanton waste that went on down here in the Kenai river - 20 million pinks, with all the hungry people that we have in the United States today. We wasted those pinks when there was no silver conservation reason, and that was specifically outlined at that Board [of Fisheries] meeting

The other thing is, he is in line with Mr. Coffey. Mr. Coffey writes to Hal Smalley, when Mr. Smalley was a Representative [House of Representatives], stating that no one should make their living in six weeks. These are people with predisposed minds. When you have a predisposed mind, then you don't meet the criteria to sit on a Board of [Fisheries]. The last thing I want to leave with you is that people need to be compassionate when they sit on boards. I sit on a lot of boards. I sit on the coalition that's down here to try to come up with a management of the resources.

The thing that's important is that people down here are hurting financially. We have people that couldn't pay their mortgages, they can't buy fuel oil in the winter, they're living on credit cards for regulations that are ridiculous. We're not here tonight and I'm not here to say you need to kill the sports fishing

industry or the guides. I want jobs. But what you need are people that sit on these boards that care about the people in the community, just like you're supposed to be "stage men" down there.

It's time for Dr. White to go packing. As far as Russell [Nelson], I think if he had good leadership and ... someone a little better helping him along, he would probably be fine on the Board of [Fisheries]. Please keep in mind that this community is financially hurting. I sit on lots of boards and commissions down here. I travel to Washington with the borough assembly. I'm trying to bring this message to everybody, and I document everything that I'm saying. What's important is that we need to save the people from going bankrupt. We need to save all the industries down here. Dr. White has helped close the industry, the commercial fishing industry in Cook Inlet. We're down to ... three processors this year. That's ridiculous. We're running people out of the state, and ... these people that have only lived here 16, 17, 18 years, they'd better start taking the heat for some of us that have lived here and have families that have lived here for a long time. Thank you for your time, and I clearly want to oppose Dr. White's reappointment.

Number 2351

STAN BLOOM testified via teleconference that he lives in Fairbanks, where he serves as the following: vice-president (indisc.) Dip Netters Association; member, Fairbanks Advisory Committee; member, AOC [Alaska Outdoor Council]; life member, NOA; and charter member, Northern (indisc.) Club International.

MR. BLOOM urged the committee to reconfirm Dr. White and Mr. Nelson to the Board of Fisheries. He said both are experienced, fair-minded professionals who make decisions based on facts and science. He remarked that both voted for a "positive customary and traditional finding" on the dipnetting in Chitna at the '99 Board [of Fisheries] meeting, which could explain commercial fishermen's opposition to them. From experience, if "you oppose the United Fishermen of Alaska, they will trash your reputation," he said. He went on to say:

While I was at a Board of Fisheries meeting in Anchorage, they even had a detective follow me around

to see if I would cheat on my wife, so they could bring that to the ... Board [of Fisheries]. What that had to do with fishing, I don't know. For many years, the commercial fishermen had controlled the ... Board [Fisheries]. They could give us two other Alaskans, two votes, and still win. It is (indisc.) in the recent past, and Dr. White and Mr. Nelson have voted fairly on the science and on the public testimony. I urge you to reconfirm both and not listen to what this letter-writing campaign that the United Fishermen of Alaska have got against these two. Thank you very much.

Number 2257

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR, testified via teleconference that he has served on the Board [of Fisheries] for the last seven years. During this time, Dr. White and Mr. Nelson have served on the Board of Fisheries. He remarked that "we" have accomplished "a lot of good things." He went on to say:"

I feel they're [Dr. White and Mr. Nelson] both very good board members. I know that they work extremely hard. They listen to all the public. They try to get all the public input they can, listen to all the science, not only from the department, but also from some of the independent scientists that give reports to the board. I feel they're both extremely good, selfless, hardworking board members. And I urge you to reconfirm them. Thank you.

Number 2194

PAUL SHADURA II read the following testimony:

I reside in the Kenai Peninsula Borough. I've traveled a thousand miles today to testify on the reconfirmation of Board of [Fisheries] member John White. There's some key points that I believe that you should consider.

[First,] how is the record of this board member proved to the committee that he has made fair and unbiased decisions that benefit all the users of the state? Section 6(e) of the Alaska Statehood Act states, the policy making officials should be selected for their ability and their dedicated interest to the resource,

and no identification should be made between a policy-making official and any particular segment of a population. Likewise, no official should be bound to represent the interest of a specific geographical region.

In addition, an excerpt from the Board of [Fisheries] review committee dated February 23, 1988, [says] in 1975 the legislature enacted a new statute which split the Board of Fisheries and the Board of Game, the members of which must be appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature without regard to political affiliation [or] geographical location. Chapter 206 SCA 1975.

However, despite the explicit aforementioned statutory prohibitions, [for] more than a quarter of a century, Alaska governors aided and abetted by the legislature have appointed individuals to the Board [of Fisheries] because of their identification and special interests or geographical areas. Reappointing board members for two or three terms does not adhere to any diversity of interests, and, in fact would solidify or ingrain the inherent bias or idealism of one member from one area and from one perspective or resource user. If we are attempting to reduce the temptation of an administration or body from exerting political philosophy on board members that are not to be considered by a political affiliation, then it would seem proper that new blood and new ideas would help to ensure there would be less collusion and a stronger attempt for Board of [Fisheries] members to balance the decisions they promulgate.

Number 2072

Have decisions made by this board member resulted in sweeping losses to resource users? In the Kuskokwim region, this area will now be closed for real conservation reasons. This is Mr. White's backyard, yet in six years, which included his time as chairman, he could not craft a moderate solution, and now his inabilities have severely impacted the economic viability for the fishing families of that region. In Cook Inlet in August 2001, Mr. White failed to approve an emergency petition that resulted in a surplus stock of pink salmon in excess of 20 million. Information

from local ADF&G personnel gave the Board [of Fisheries] their best available information on the need for the surplus fishery. And assessments that the conservation species that the board had been concerned about were returning in record numbers. In final analysis, [it was] the best return ... to the Kenai River in 20 years.

Mr. White was instrumental in deterring the responsibilities of the decline of chum salmon away from his turf and placing the blame on a distant area [M]. These sweeping changes to this area's regulations [would] not as board member [Mr.] Coffey alluded to in a recent legislative committee report, [what would] make the Kuskokwim whole again.

Does this board member [Dr. White] listen to the concerns of others? Does he have the necessary participation experience in affected areas? Board member [Dr.] White has stated publicly that he does not feel that the public testimony is necessary, fall workshop 1999. He voted against having a recorded copy of all committee meetings, fall workshop 1999. He reserves his ex parte communications with only selected members of the public and stakeholders. Many times, I or others in the commercial fishing community have gone to Mr. White and have been rudely cast off with no answers except a sarcastic remark.

Number 1971

Mr. White is a dentist from Bethel. Yet his recent press release states that he is a commercial fisherman. I believe that he has a freshwater longline permit that is not an open fishery, and a limited fishery gillnet on the Kuskokwim.

In contrast, you may review someone like myself, who is a third-generation commercial fisherman in Cook Inlet, family histories that dates back over a hundred years. I'm an Alaskan native descendent, Russian-English heritage, because they were the first explorers in the state. I commercially fish salmon, herring, and halibut. My family have owned traps. We have been involved in processing, fish buying, [and] tendering. I've subsisted on salted salmon and sport fished on the Kenai before it was fashionable.

I'm an active board member to the Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association for 20 years, board member to the SERTAC (ph), which is the oil watchdog in Cook Inlet, and the Kenai River Special Management Area Board. ... I have been involved with KPFA [Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association] for 30 years and [am] a UFA [University of Alaska-Fairbanks] board member. I live, eat, and breathe fishing, and I am an Alaskan commercial fisherman. Please do not confirm John White. He will not improve the fisheries. He will not use his intellect to bring the conflicts of individual users to a mutual agreement. Mr. White's greatest shortcoming is that his arrogance precedes his intelligence.

Number 1856

ROBERT HAYANO testified via teleconference that he was in favor of Dr. White's reconfirmation. He said he has done an excellent job. His voting record shows that he puts resources first before user groups. He remarked that Dr. White should be commended for having the "ability and patience to allow us, the stakeholders, the maximum amount of time to work out our differences and come to a solution before he takes it at his level and votes for a solution."

Mr. HAYANO noted that the committee process that [Dr. White] helped institute to the Board [of Fisheries] is extremely beneficial to the public. It enables board members to gain more knowledge in their limited amount of time and also provides people like himself with the opportunity to testify. He remarked that this would result in a "better solution to a lot of these user conflicts." He indicated that Dr. Whites' "ability to understand the scientific knowledge and ... willingness to go outside of the department and listen to other experts " is also a reason why he should be reconfirmed.

Number 1762

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON encouraged Chair Stevens to require testifiers to "maintain some sense of decorum and not be personally insulting, [or] assail the person."

Number 1722

MR. OLSON stated that he supports the reconfirmation of Dr. White. He said he has been "very good" to work with and considers all testimony heard at Board of Fisheries meetings. He referred to earlier remarks concerning "our" depleted fishery and the state of it, and said that this is true, but it's not the fault of the Board of Fisheries' members. He indicated that the members are there to make policy, and that anything that happens "out in the ocean here in Bristol Bay [where] our runs have been cycling" is not because of them.

Number 1652

ROBIN SAMUELSON testified via teleconference, saying that he has been a commercial fisherman in Bristol Bay for 30 years, and has served three years on the Board of (Fisheries) and the North Pacific Fisheries [Management Council]. He noted that he himself has worked with Dr. White, who has voted for some of things that he has voted for and some he hasn't. However, Dr. White has always treated him and people that were in the audience with respect, he said. He stated that Dr. White serves as an advisor on the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission, an important commission that deals with Canada, Japan, Russia, and the U.S. He indicated that Dr. White's expertise from the Board of Fisheries has provided him with an "excellent insight" into the commission.

MR. SAMUELSON remarked that the Board of Fisheries' committee process is an innovative method that has helped. He said ADF&G has put "their spin on things" quite often, but Dr. White has the intelligence and background now to keep ADF&G "in line."

MR. SAMUELSON pointed out that Dr. White was recently nominated to the North Pacific Research Board, which ties in very well with his Board of Fisheries experience, now that he's "shedding" the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. He remarked that "those research dollars are hard to come by for the state, [in regard to] the diversity, [and] the geographic monstrosity as the state." It will be very beneficial to have someone like Dr. White on there as an advisor.

MR. SAMUELSON indicated that Dr. White, a dentist and commercial fisherman from the Yukon, has made sacrifices by serving on the Board of Fisheries. Serving on the Board of Fisheries has meant being away from his wife and children and giving up his professional practice, he said. As a resident and fisherman of the state, he thanked Dr. White for his service. He urged the

committee, "in the strongest sense possible," to reappoint him, since stability is needed in the commercial fishing industry.

[There was poor sound quality due to technical difficulties for the remainder of the meeting.]

Number 1420

ROGER WILLIAMS, President, Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA) stated that he lives in Kasilof, Alaska. He mentioned that he is also serves as secretary on the Kenai Soldotna Advisory Committee. He indicated that the following comments are the views of KPFA's board members, who are elected by "our" people. He declared that "we" oppose the reconfirmation of Dr. White. [Tape was indisc. for the next few minutes.]

MR. WILLIAMS mentioned that the governor has not appointed a commercial fisherman to the Board of Fisheries in seven years. [Tape was indisc. for the next few minutes.]

MR. WILLIAMS remarked that Dr. White has had a difficult time dealing with the public, especially with commercial fishermen from Cook Inlet. He said, "we" have had a hard time trying to communicate with him, and this needs to be a prerequisite for his job, because "we're the people that live and fish there." He indicated Dr. White doesn't pay attention to the biological attention furnished by the biologists, "who do that 12 months a year, [and] live in the area." Mr. Williams also noted that he has heard a lot about sustained fisheries in Cook Inlet.

MR. WILLIAMS commented that the problem seems to be that [Board of Fisheries] is trying to get rid of the commercial fisheries and in turn make sports fishing stronger. However, he said "they" are not going to be able to take up slack that "we" leave behind. He went on to say, "We're generating anywhere from 30 on a bad year to 160 million into [the] economy in six weeks." He mentioned that when he was a Board [of Fisheries] member, they tried mediation to work out these issues. However, the mediator who was hired "leaked a bunch of information to the press," so that person was fired. He also pointed out that they tried to do mediation at the "grassroots level on the advisory committees."

Number 1254

CARL ROSIER, President, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), read the following testimony:

As many of you know, the Alaska Outdoor Council is an association of 45 outdoor recreation groups supporting conservation and wise use of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources, protection of public access, fair allocation of resources, and equal protection of the constitutional rights of all Alaskans to use our natural resources.

The Alaska Outdoor Council is a strong supporter of the Alaska Board regulatory system. During the nearly 30 years of my career with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, I have had the opportunity to observe and participate in a significant number of Board of Fisheries regulatory sessions with a variety of board members. Alaska's system is the most publicly open process in the nation, and when one views the generally good condition of our fish resources, it is a system that has served the state well. A significant part of the board's effectiveness has been the quality and continuity of many dedicated individuals that have served on what we consider to be the toughest regulatory appointment in the state.

Your committee has before it two very dedicated and capable individuals that are truly deserving of being confirmed for another term on the Board of Fisheries. The current Board of Fisheries operates as a consensus building entity that has established efficient processes to bring opposing views to the table for resolution among the stakeholders and further enlightenment of the board. If the stakeholders cannot reach consensus, the board has the last and best information on which to make the final decisions on a given issue. Much of this system has been arrived at through the leadership of Dr. John White.

The present board leaves no question about good science and conservation of the resource being priority considerations in the regulatory decision process. In this arena, the Board of Fisheries has completed the initial development of a sustainable fisheries policy for the state and is now making application to the various fisheries statewide. Development of the policy has occurred in conjunction

with stakeholder groups and the technical support of ADF&G. This policy is now providing guidance to the public, the department, and future boards on decision-making to assure continued sustained yield of our fisheries resources. In our view, [it is] a good piece of work under the leadership of Dr. White and one that will go far in assuring the long-term health of our fishery's resources.

Balance in regard to decisions affecting a variety of user groups by the current board is probably the best I have observed in a fish board. No one interest group dominates the board as we have frequently observed in the past. It is AOC's view that the present board gives true consideration of the public's demands, whether you are commercial, subsistence, personal use, or sport user. As a participant, you may not like a decision, but you have every opportunity to make your case and know that the board is listening and fairly evaluating your view.

All members of the current board come to the meetings well prepared, and it is obvious by the debates within the board that the reams of material produced for the board's edification [are] indeed being used to support the board's decisions.

The two members before you for confirmation have grown in their knowledge and understanding of the multitude of complex fisheries in our state. Both of these individuals have become an integral part of a well-functioning regulatory board that is important to all Alaskans. The system is functioning well, and the Alaska Outdoor Council urges you to support confirmation of Dr. John White and Mr. Russell Nelson for another term on the Board of Fisheries. Thank you.

Number 0849

REPRESENTATIVE SCALZI asked Dr. White to explain what freshwater longlining is.

DR. WHITE replied that he has a salmon driftnet permit for the Kuskokwim River and Kuskokwim Bay. He said he also has an interim-use freshwater longline permit, which allows him to

longline burbot in the river in years that he sends an application to the commissioner's office.

REPRESENTATIVE SCALZI wondered what burbot was.

DR. WHITE said freshwater cod.

Number 0744

CO-CHAIR STEVENS said yes.

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL made a motion to move the confirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White forward for consideration by the full House and Senate, with individual recommendations. There being no objection, the confirmations of Mr. Nelson and Dr. White were advanced.

CO-CHAIR STEVENS called an at-ease at 6:40 p.m. in order to hear the Briefing on the Yukon Salmon Agreement. [Minutes for this presentation can be found in the 6:45 p.m. cover sheet for the same date.]