

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT MEETING
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 18, 2002

3:08 p.m.

HOUSE FISHERIES MEMBERS PRESENT

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

HOUSE FISHERIES MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

HOUSE RESOURCES MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Drew Scalzi, Co-Chair
Representative Beverly Masek, Co-Chair
Representative Hugh Fate, Vice Chair
Representative Lesil McGuire
Representative Joe Green
Representative Mike Chenault
Representative Beth Kerttula
Representative Gary Stevens
Representative Mary Kapsner

HOUSE RESOURCES MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING

Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

Mary McDowell - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

PREVIOUS ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

MARY McDOWELL, Appointee
to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
c/o Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission
8800 Glacier Highway, Suite 109
Juneau, Alaska 99801-8079

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 02-8, SIDE A [House FSH tape]

Number 0001

CO-CHAIR DREW SCALZI called the joint meeting of the House Special Committee on Fisheries and the House Resources Standing Committee to order at 3:08 p.m. Members present were Representatives Scalzi, Masek, Fate, Green, Chenault, McGuire, Kerttula, Stevens, Wilson, Dyson, Coghill, and Kapsner.

CONFIRMATION HEARING

Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

CO-CHAIR SCALZI announced that the committees would jointly consider the reappointment of Mary McDowell to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission. He listed her qualifications from the resume included in the packet. Representative Scalzi said she was well experienced.

Number 0167

MARY McDOWELL, Appointee to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, told members her background in the commercial fishing industry has served her well and is very useful.

Number 0214

CO-CHAIR MASEK informed members that in all her years at the legislature, she has found Ms. McDowell to do an excellent job. She said Ms. McDowell's name should be passed on to the full body for confirmation.

Number 0387

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS said he had worked with Ms. McDowell on another issue and that it was a pleasure. He asked how the three-commissioner panel works together as a whole.

MS. McDOWELL explained that the three-member panel adjudicates cases, makes decisions about limitations, puts out regulatory packages, and shares administrative duties. There are several challenges in retaining and recruiting new staff because of an exodus of experienced staff to federal government jobs. The commission is working hard to streamline and upgrade computer systems to handle the large amount of data with such a small staff. Noting that there are big challenges to the fishing industry, she warned that all concerned must be very careful in dealing with those issues. Ms. McDowell said the limitation program was carefully crafted to bring benefits to the state, keep fishing communities alive, and keep jobs viable.

Number 0672

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON asked if any of Representative Scalzi's bills were giving her concern.

MS. McDOWELL said there were many positive things going through the legislature. She said the commission was particularly interested in HB 287 and HB 288.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON asked if there were any bills [concerning the fishing industry] that ought to be considered more slowly and rethought.

MS. McDOWELL said she was not too concerned about any bills in particular.

Number 0815

CO-CHAIR SCALZI told the committee his primary concern was not doing harm to the system or the State of Alaska. He said Ms. McDowell was in constant contact with him on matter of the bills

he had brought forward to deal with some of the problems in the commercial fishing industry.

Number 0849

REPRESENTATIVE McGUIRE asked Ms. McDowell what she saw for the future of the commercial fishing industry in Alaska.

MS. McDOWELL reminded the committees that with all of the talk about trouble in the salmon industry, people may lose sight of the health of the industry overall. She said fleet consolidation is one issue on the horizon. These consolidations must be done with care; for every boat the state loses from a fishery, it loses jobs in many sectors. She said fleet consolidation must strike a balance between fleet viability and job maintenance. Ms. McDowell stated that she could see a bright future for the industry, but that it will take work.

Number 1015

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN mentioned subsistence fishing issues on rivers that flow through federal lands. He asked how she views the issue.

MS. McDOWELL said those issues are out of the purview of her commission, and are more the concern of the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. However, she said it gets to the heart of the importance of state management, which would provide a more balanced approach to all those concerned.

Number 1180

CO-CHAIR MASEK moved to forward Mary McDowell's nomination to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to the full body for confirmation. There being no objection, the confirmation of Mary McDowell was advanced from the House Resources Standing Committee.

ADJOURNMENT

Number 1206

CO-CHAIR SCALZI announced that the joint meeting of the House Special Committee on Fisheries and the House Resources Standing Committee was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

[Shortly thereafter, the House Special Committee on Fisheries moved to forward the nomination of Mary McDowell to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to the full body for consideration; there was no objection, and thus the confirmation of Mary McDowell was considered advanced from both committees.]