

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

April 5, 2010

3:06 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Chair  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Robert L. "Bob" Buch  
Representative Scott Kawasaki

HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

Representative Craig Johnson, Co-Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative David Guttenberg  
Representative Scott Kawasaki  
Representative Chris Tuck

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Representative Charisse Millett  
Representative Cathy Engstrom Munoz  
Representative Wes Keller, Vice Chair

HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chair  
Representative Kurt Olson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Board of Fisheries

Claude Vincent Webster - King Salmon

Thomas G. Kluberton - Talkeetna

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

CLAUDE VINCENT WEBSTER, Appointee  
to the Board of Fisheries  
King Salmon, Alaska

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

THOMAS G. KLUBERTON, Appointee  
to the Board of Fisheries  
Talkeetna, Alaska

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

SCOTT EGGEMEYER, Member at Large  
Kenai River Professional Guide Association  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

ROLAND MAW, Executive Director  
United Cook Inlet Drift Association  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the Board of Fisheries confirmation hearings.

DAVE GOGGIA, President  
Kenai River Professional Guide Association  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

REUBEN HANKE, Fisheries Chair  
Kenai River Sportfishing Association  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

ANDY SZCESNY

Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

DAVID MARTIN

Clam Gulch, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the Board of Fisheries confirmation hearings.

JOHN BLAIR, Executive Director

SouthEast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO)

Sitka, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in favor of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

JIM MARCOTTE, Executive Director

Board of Fisheries

Boards Support Section

Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the Board of Fisheries confirmation hearings.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:06:46 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR CRAIG JOHNSON AND CHAIR BRYCE EDGMON** called the joint meeting of the House Resources Standing Committee and the House Special Committee on Fisheries to order at 3:07 p.m. Present at the call to order from the House Special Committee on Fisheries were Representatives Edgmon, Kawasaki, Buch, and Johnson. Present at the call to order from the House Resources Standing Committee were Representatives Johnson, Kawasaki, Tuck, Seaton, Edgmon, and Guttenberg. Representative Peggy Wilson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)**

##### **Board of Fisheries**

[3:07:37 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON announced that the committees would first consider the appointment of Claude Webster to the Board of Fisheries (BOF).

[3:07:53 PM](#)

CLAUDE VINCENT WEBSTER, Appointee to the BOF, said he is known as Vince, and informed the committee he has been commercial fishing for 26 years in King Salmon and Bristol Bay. He pointed out he currently serves on the BOF and has been reappointed by the governor.

[3:08:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG complimented Mr. Webster on his resume.

[3:09:04 PM](#)

MR. WEBSTER, in response to Co-Chair Johnson, said it is a great honor to serve on the BOF and look after one of the largest renewable resources in the world. He expressed his pleasure at his reappointment.

[3:09:24 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON invited Mr. Kluberton to testify.

[3:09:37 PM](#)

THOMAS G. KLUBERTON, Appointee to the BOF, stated his experience with the BOF began during his term on the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough Assembly, due to the mayor and assembly's interest in fisheries issues. Beginning in 2008, he served on the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee and was also very involved in the Cook Inlet fish cycle. He said, "I'm happy to be here and answer any questions you've got."

[3:10:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON opened public testimony.

[3:11:10 PM](#)

SCOTT EGGEMEYER, Member at Large, Kenai River Professional Guide Association, informed the committees he was representing the

Kenai River Professional Guide Association, and expressed support for both appointees.

[3:11:41 PM](#)

ROLAND MAW, Executive Director, United Cook Inlet Drift Association, said his organization is not in support of the nomination of Mr. Kluberton. The BOF regulates a multi-billion dollar industry involving the state's economy and affecting multiple species that have a variety of stakeholders. Mr. Maw stated that Mr. Kluberton lacks training in biology, practical training in resource management, and represents "a very narrow interest." In addition, members of the association have reviewed Mr. Kluberton's statements and question his decision-making processes because he does not have the proper background or experience. The association would like to discuss with Mr. Kluberton statewide issues on species management; however, there was not enough time before the hearing. The United Cook Inlet Drift Association supports Mr. Webster, but not Mr. Kluberton.

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON urged Mr. Maw to talk with Mr. Kluberton as the confirmation is not scheduled until 4/9/10.

[3:13:41 PM](#)

DAVE GOGGIA, President, Kenai River Professional Guide Association, stated his support for Mr. Kluberton and Mr. Webster.

[3:14:26 PM](#)

REUBEN HANKE, Fisheries Chair, Kenai River Sportfishing Association, said his organization is in favor of the appointments of Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton. The association has had three years of good experience with Mr. Webster, who has shown a vast knowledge of the fisheries across the state. Furthermore, Mr. Kluberton's testimony at the upper Cook Inlet board meeting was well taken, and the association believes he will be an excellent addition to the BOF.

[3:15:28 PM](#)

ANDY SZCESNY informed the committees he was in favor of the confirmations of Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton to the BOF. He opined Mr. Webster is very knowledgeable and fair-minded, and Mr. Kluberton would be a great addition.

[3:16:28 PM](#)

DAVID MARTIN said he was speaking for himself. He expressed his support of Mr. Webster, but not of Mr. Kluberton. Mr. Kluberton is a member of the Mat-Su Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee which has issued proposals and publications that are not based on the best science available, or on scientific data from the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). Furthermore, the BOF is concerned with more than Cook Inlet, and must represent people who work in the fishing industry throughout the state. Mr. Martin opined members of the BOF must follow national standards and the biological management aspect of fishing; in fact, Mr. Kluberton's previous statements indicate that he is not the best qualified person to represent, and make regulations on, fisheries.

[3:18:35 PM](#)

JOHN BLAIR, Executive Director, SouthEast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO), stated SEAGO represents sport fishing charter operators, lodge owners, and their angler clients. His organization is in support of the confirmations of Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton. Over the last two years, Mr. Webster has exhibited leadership at the BOF and is a valuable and capable member for the following reasons: understands the significance of the decisions of the board and is well informed; makes an effort to understand different points of view; moves the process to a new level of professionalism and fairness. Mr. Kluberton is knowledgeable on fishing matters and has served on many boards and commissions, including as the chair of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee. Because he is a businessman, he also understands the importance of regulations to the fishing industry statewide. Mr. Blair opined Mr. Kluberton has the time and the ability to process large volumes of data, and a willingness to build consensus regarding complex issues of fisheries management. He encouraged the committees to support both nominations.

[3:21:24 PM](#)

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR stated his support of both nominees, saying that he was a member of the BOF and has known Mr. Webster for 17 years. He opined both Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton understand terminal fisheries, unlike some commercial fisherman.

[3:22:50 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON asked whether there was a representative from the governor's office to testify regarding the vacant seat on the BOF.

[3:23:36 PM](#)

JIM MARCOTTE, Executive Director, Board of Fisheries, Boards Support Section, ADF&G, stated that he did not represent the governor's office on the appointments, but his office works with the members of the board. He advised that there is a vacancy on the board created by the recent resignation of a board member from Fairbanks. The governor's office is working on the selection of a replacement.

[3:24:45 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON observed that seat would be held by an unconfirmed member for nearly two years.

MR. MARCOTTE agreed, assuming that the appointee is named after this legislative session, that person would serve on the board with full rights and responsibilities, but would not be confirmed until the legislature reconvenes. In fact, that was the case with the person who recently resigned, Ms. Woods.

[3:26:18 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON asked whether there are major meetings scheduled between now and next April.

MR. MARCOTTE advised that next October there will be a work session, and in November there will be a meeting on lower Cook Inlet finfish in Homer. Furthermore, in January, and early February 2011, finfish topics will come up. Late in February and early in March, the board will deal with upper Cook Inlet. Finally in late March, statewide tanner crab will be addressed.

[3:27:26 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON surmised the unconfirmed board member would have the opportunity to participate in the Upper and Lower Cook Inlet meetings prior to confirmation.

MR. MARCOTTE said that is correct.

[3:27:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said his office has received no written comments on these appointments, and encouraged committee members to share any comments that are received prior to 4/9/10.

[3:28:43 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON affirmed any written responses would be provided for all committee members. He then closed public testimony.

[3:29:14 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON asked Mr. Webster and Mr. Kluberton for further statements.

MR. WEBSTER observed that his qualifications have become known during his three years of service on the board.

[3:30:18 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON asked the appointees about holding board meetings in the regions under consideration.

MR. WEBSTER stated it is essential to have the board travel to local areas. If so, professional lobbyists will not be deterred, and locals can have a chance to testify.

MR. KLUBERTON said it is a rewarding experience, and helpful, to have a board travel and allow access to it by local individuals.

[3:33:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON asked Mr. Kluberton for a final statement.

MR. KLUBERTON clarified that he is no longer a member of the Mat-Su Borough Assembly, or of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Sportsmen's Committee. He stated that he wanted legislators, and all aspects of the fishing community, to realize that his perspective has its roots as a sportsman, but service on the blue ribbon committee increased his insight to the process, regulations, and operations of the BOF. In fact, on the assembly, although he represented his district, assembly members must also represent the entire borough, and biases must be set aside "and make the best decision for all." He then pointed out that the chair of a committee is sometimes required to sign documents that are written by the group, and "it doesn't mean that that's the limit of my purview or my perspective...."

[3:35:06 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON reminded the public the committees are only reviewing the qualifications of the appointees at this time, and he urged parties to submit written comments to legislators.

[3:36:06 PM](#)

CHAIR EDGMON made a motion to advance from the House Resources Standing Committee and the House Special Committee on Fisheries the nominations of Claude Vincent Webster and Thomas G. Kluberton to the Board of Fisheries.

[3:36:31 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOHNSON asked whether there were any objections to the motion. There being none, the nominations were advanced from the House Resources Standing Committee and the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

[3:36:40 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committees, the joint meeting between the House Resources Standing Committee and the House Special Committee on Fisheries was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.