

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

March 28, 2013

10:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Bob Herron
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Kurt Olson
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Eric Feige

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):

Board of Fisheries

Reed Morisky - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

REED MORISKY, Appointee
Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions as appointee to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF).

RICK GEASE, Executive Director
Kenai River Sportfishing Association
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified with support for the appointee to the BOF.

HEATH HILYARD, Executive Director

Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO)
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified with support for the appointee to the BOF.

REUBEN HANKE
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified with support for the appointee to the BOF.

KARL JOHNSTONE, Chairman
Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified with support for the appointee to the BOF.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:06:31 AM](#)

CHAIR PAUL SEATON called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Present at the call to order Representatives Seaton, Herron, Olson, and Kreiss-Tomkins; Representatives Gattis and Johnson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

Confirmation Hearing(s): **Board of Fisheries**

[10:06:47 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be a confirmation hearing for the Board of Fisheries.

[10:07:34 AM](#)

REED MORISKY, Appointee, Board of Fisheries (BOF), said Alaska's fisheries appear to be at an important crossroad; sustainable but in need of attention. Difficult decisions may lay ahead for the BOF, and he stated his interest in being a reasonable, rational voice as part of the process. On request of the committee chair, he provided a brief biography since his 1981 arrival in Alaska.

[10:09:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON mentioned the pressing concern for escapement of Chinook salmon to the river systems of Western Alaska and asked if the candidate has any ideas for rectifying the situation.

MR. MORISKY said, having visited Bethel, the knowledge and effects are first hand to him.

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON implored that as a BOF member, he maintain a critical eye on behalf of the people of the region for correcting the loss of the Chinook salmon fishery.

[10:12:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE OLSON stressed that similar sentiments are shared by constituents of the Upper and Lower Cook Inlet drainage areas. A number of issues have been persisting with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) in this area, including allocation and enumeration equipment. He appealed to the appointee to keep an open mind to issues on a statewide basis.

[10:13:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS noted that the appointee has a brother who fishes commercially and asked if it is indicated in the application paperwork.

MR. MORISKY said he declares the conflict at the beginning of each BOF meeting, and it is stated on the first page of the application form.

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS asked what the nominee's immediate response would be to a critical topic brought before the BOF.

MR. MORISKY answered that his foremost concern would be for the resource, with due respect for the user.

[10:15:46 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON returned to the Chinook salmon issue and said he attended the Arctic Yukon-Kuskokwim (AYK) Sustainable Salmon Initiative meeting in December, 2012, where scientists identified seven reasons for low Chinook returns, as well as discussed the gap analysis. The theories posed were then field tested for purposes of validation. The gap analysis, conversely, has provided informational data without connection to a theory/test. It is important to formulate critical

questions in order for science to be applied. He cautioned that simply receiving information does not provide answers, and suggested that the candidate scrutinize the Sustainable Management Study, as a good resource for addressing the Chinook issue. Additionally, he advised Mr. Morisky that the committee has been considering the unintended Chinook bycatch mortalities, and passed a resolution in that regard, as well as an additional measure to protect Chinook by passing statute relating to the use of barbless hooks, HB 110.

[10:19:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON asked why the appointee is interested in serving on the BOF, and stressed the pressures inherent to sitting on the board.

MR. MORISKY said life circumstances allow him the time to devote to the BOF and the issues are of interest and concern, and that he is aware of the circumstances related to serving.

CHAIR SEATON opened public testimony.

[10:21:43 AM](#)

RICK GEASE, Executive Director, Kenai River Sportfishing Association, said the nominee has all the skills necessary to be a good board member.

[10:22:40 AM](#)

HEATH HILYARD, Executive Director, Southeast Alaska Guides Organization (SEAGO), echoed the previous speaker's sentiments and reported that Mr. Morisky has performed well under pressure at recent meetings.

[10:24:02 AM](#)

REUBEN HANKE, stated support for the nominee and said the candidate has already made an impressive board appearance. He said new members are sometimes reluctant to mingle with the public when contentious issues are on the agenda, but Mr. Morisky has been approachable, thus far.

[10:25:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON noted that the board members sometimes remain seated, during a recess, due to unfair lobbying efforts that can ensue at heated hearings.

[10:25:58 AM](#)

KARL JOHNSTONE, Chairman, Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), stated support for the nominee and said the candidate has proven his worth under fire at recent meetings. He is approachable, aware of the issues, and ready to meet the serious challenges that Alaska faces. If there was a model for board members, he said, Mr. Morisky would be the poster child.

[10:27:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON referred to the intense, at times over zealous, lobbying that occurs at board hearings and asked if boundaries could be established.

MR. JOHNSTONE responded that the public, transparent forum is important for the board to maintain. As the chairman, it is his duty to disseminate information in a timely manner, in order for members to formulate appropriate responses. He said further steps could be necessary but receiving advance copy is helpful.

[10:28:36 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON voiced concern for reducing mortality of Chinook salmon stocks and expressed interest in having the BOF prioritize the issue. He mentioned the committee's efforts to address bycatch.

CHAIR SEATON closed public testimony.

[10:30:08 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked what fishery the appointee's brother participates in.

MR. MORISKY responded that he is a power troller in the Southeast Alaska fishery.

[10:31:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HERRON made a motion to advance the confirmation of Reed Morisky to the Alaska Board of Fisheries, to the joint

session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

CHAIR SEATON reminded members that signing the report regarding appointment to the board in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointee, and that the nomination is merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[10:31:49 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:32 a.m.