

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

April 8, 2014  
10:06 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair  
Representative Eric Feige  
Representative Lynn Gattis  
Representative Bob Herron  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Kurt Olson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Board of Fisheries

Susan Jeffrey - Kodiak  
John Jensen - Petersburg  
Reed Morisky - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous information to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SUSAN JEFFREY, Appointee  
Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF)  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G)  
Kodiak, Alaska

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

JOHN MCCOMBS  
Ninilchik, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Susan Jeffrey as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

RICKY GEASE, Executive Director  
Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA)  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Susan Jeffrey as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

RICHARD MCGAHAN, Fisherman  
Nikiski, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Susan Jeffrey as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

DAVID MARTIN  
Clam Gulch, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the confirmation hearing for Susan Jeffrey as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

PAUL SHADURA, Board Member  
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA)  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Susan Jeffrey as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

CHRIS GARCIA  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Susan Jeffrey, as appointee to the Board of Fisheries (BOF).

HOWARD DELO, Member  
Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFW)  
Big Lake, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Susan Jeffrey, John Jensen, and Reed Morisky as appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

KARL JOHNSTONE, Chair  
Alaska Board of Fisheries  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Susan Jeffrey, Reed Morisky, and John Jensen as appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

JOHN JENSEN, Appointee  
Board of Fisheries  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Petersburg, Alaska

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

REED MORISKY, Appointee  
Board of Fisheries  
Alaska Department of Fish & Game  
Fairbanks, Alaska

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

RICKY GEASE, Executive Director  
Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA)  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Reed Morisky and John Jensen as appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

PAUL SHADURA, Board Member  
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA)  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of John Jensen as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

PAUL SHADURA, Spokesperson  
South K Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI)  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the confirmation hearing for Reed Morisky as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

DAVID MARTIN  
Clam Gulch, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Reed Morisky as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

CHRIS GARCIA  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Reed Morisky as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

MARK DUCKER  
Kasilof, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Reed Morisky as appointee to the Board of Fisheries.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:06:33 AM](#)

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

[10:06:47 AM](#)

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):**  
**Board of Fisheries (BOF)**

CHAIR SEATON announced that the only order of business would be confirmation hearings of Susan Jeffrey, John Jensen, and Reed Morisky to the Board of Fisheries.

[10:07:29 AM](#)

SUSAN JEFFREY, Appointee, Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF), Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G), stated she has lived in Kodiak since 1972 and has been involved in various commercial fisheries including crab and halibut. She and her husband are currently setnet fisherman on Kodiak Island. She has also been a fisheries editor for the Kodiak Daily Mirror for many years and has written fisheries articles for several publications throughout that time.

[10:08:24 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON assumed that she is aware of the amount of time serving on this board can take.

MS. JEFFREY said that she previously served one term on the board and she is aware of the commitment necessary to understand the issues and meet the challenges. She would like to put the experience and knowledge that she has gained to use by serving a second term, especially since the fisheries are vitally important to the state and the people in Alaska.

CHAIR SEATON opened public testimony on the confirmation hearings for the appointees to the Board of Fisheries.

[10:10:22 AM](#)

JOHN MCCOMBS stated that he attended all 14 days of the Board of Fisheries [Upper Cook Inlet Finfish] meetings in Anchorage [on January 31-February 13, 2014]. The BOF makes the rules on how

regulations are made, but in February [2014] the board did not follow their own rules. On the last day of meetings, the BOF voted 7-0 on two board-generated proposals. He offered his belief that the Vice-Chair, Thomas Kluberton, wants to turn Cook Inlet into a "Bristol Bay style" fishery. He was able to convince other board members to vote on his board-generated proposal that was void of the public process, he stated. The fact that these board members think Cook Inlet is the same as Bristol Bay means they lack an understanding of the fisheries. Therefore, he said, he cannot support any of the nominees.

[10:11:59 AM](#)

RICKY GEASE, Executive Director, Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA), offered the KRSA's support for the reappointment of Susan Jeffrey to the Board of Fisheries. He said that Ms. Jeffrey has a good working knowledge of all the fisheries in Alaska and has shown herself to be inquisitive by questioning staff, participants, and users in the fisheries to gain a better knowledge of how they operate in Alaska. He said she is open to anyone who wants to ask questions, makes herself available to the public, and can deal with the complex and complicated issues related to fisheries in Alaska.

[10:12:41 AM](#)

RICHARD MCGAHAN, Fisherman, stated he has been fishing in Cook Inlet since 1955. After listening to the Board of Fisheries meeting in February, he does not believe he could support any of the current BOF members.

DAVID MARTIN said he had not planned to speak on Susan Jeffrey's appointment; however, he expressed the same concerns as the other two testifiers on the whole Board of Fisheries process.

[10:14:17 AM](#)

PAUL SHADURA, Board Member, Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA), stated that he is a longtime resident of the Kenai Peninsula. The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association has been a voice for the Cook Inlet setnet commercial fisherman since 1954, representing approximately 736 limited-entry setnet permit holders. He related the KPFA's goal to ensure the sustainability of our fisheries resources and offered support for Susan Jeffrey, who is a salmon setnet permit holder, one of approximately 4,500 permit holders that comprise the majority of salmon gear types in the state. With the diverse nature of

fishery resources in the state, her direct involvement in a fishery and her commitment to serve on the board for a second term, using her skills and experience, can only improve the regulatory board process. She has an extensive background in communications and can assist the BOF to develop management directives based on intensive discussions with the department, stakeholders, and other board members. He said the KPFA finds this board member to be very approachable and interested in gathering information to better understand the complex science necessary for fair and reasonable decision-making. He said he looks forward to working with [the board] in establishing policies that are fair and equitable to all fishermen and reasonably calculated to promote conservation carried out in such a manner that no particular individual, corporation, or other entity acquires an excessive share of such privileges. He concluded by saying the KPFA urges the committee and the legislature to recommend and confirm Susan Jeffrey for reappointment to the Board of Fisheries.

[10:16:47 AM](#)

CHRIS GARCIA said, "The whole board is messed up." He disagreed with some of the BOF's decisions that have affected commercial salmon fishing. He said that commercial guided fishing in the Kenai River should be closed. He added that current board members have ignored data and studies and instead have moved forward with the Kenai River Sportfishing Association's agenda.

[10:18:19 AM](#)

HOWARD DELO, Member, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Fish and Wildlife Commission (MSBFW), said the MSBFW unanimously voted to support Susan Jeffrey's reappointment to the Board of Fisheries. He also offered MSBFW's support for John Jensen and Reed Morisky for the same reasons; that they are all approachable, well informed, and well spoken. He said the commission felt that Ms. Jeffrey made a reasoned conservation-oriented decision during the recent upper Cook Inlet meeting. She has demonstrated an ability to listen to people, understand the issues, and she votes to protect the resource first and then determines how to best allocate the fish resources among users. He concluded that she has done a fine job and the commission supports her reappointment. He pointed out that the Northern District of Cook Inlet has 8 of 12 fish stocks of statewide concern.

[10:22:29 AM](#)

KARL JOHNSTONE, Chair, Alaska Board of Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, offered support for all three appointees. He said that with these appointments the BOF membership demonstrates diversity in user groups, ethnicity, and gender, plus these members have proven to have the ability to work well together. He offered his belief that Susan Jeffrey, who is a commercial fisherman from Kodiak, has performed well in her first term and has been able to make decisions that are best for Alaska. He said she is an open-minded, hard-working member. She provides a gender balance and perspective that would be lacking with an all-male board. He turned to Reed Morisky's confirmation, noting that Mr. Morisky is able to provide a fair argument for a fair allocation. He mixes well with the public, is well-informed, and bases his decisions on science. In terms of appointee, John Jensen, he described him as a senior BOF member who has participated in many of the fisheries the board regulates. He said Mr. Jensen understands the BOF process and policies. He emphasized that the BOF benefits from Mr. Jensen's experience and the state is fortunate that he is willing to serve. He hoped that Mr. Jensen would be reappointed.

[10:26:02 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON, after first determining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on the confirmation hearings for Susan Jeffrey, Reed Morisky, and John Jensen as appointees to the Board of Fisheries (BOF).

[10:26:32 AM](#)

CHAIR SEATON asked for a response on the earlier comment made with respect to any board-generated proposal that the testifier said was taken up without soliciting any public input at a recent BOF meeting.

MS. JEFFREY was unsure of the specific proposal, noting the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting spanned 14 days.

CHAIR SEATON restated the previous concern, that at the end of the BOF [Upper Cook Inlet Finfish] meeting there were two board-generated proposals taken up.

MS. JEFFREY said the BOF Upper Cook Inlet [Finfish] meeting spanned 14 days. She acknowledged that there was some confusion at the end of the meeting just prior to adjournment. She recalled that the BOF had decided not to take up any board-generated proposal since many of the public attending the

meeting had left; however, the meeting record and recording could be reviewed.

10:29:22 AM

JOHN JENSEN, Appointee, Board of Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, expressed an interest in serving on the board for another three years. He said he has been a commercial fisherman for 45 years and is a lifelong Alaskan from Petersburg. He currently participates in halibut, king, and tanner crab fisheries in Southeast Alaska. In 2009, he started a small boat rental business in Petersburg. He said his two sons both commercially fish. He has served on the BOF for 12 years and looks forward to a fifth term.

10:30:24 AM

REED MORISKY, Appointee, Board of Fisheries, Alaska Department of Fish & Game, stated that he has lived in Alaska since 1981, is a sport fishing guide in Interior Alaska, and holds a U.S. Coast Guard Captain's license. He related that his brother is a commercial fisherman in Southeast Alaska who holds a salmon troll permit. He has previously held permits for subsistence fishing in Interior Alaska. He has also participated in personal use fisheries and holds a deep appreciation for harvesting food for himself and his family.

MR. MORISKY stated his interest in Alaska fisheries began in the late 1980s when the legislature considered licensing sport fishing guides. Since then, he's been a member of the Sport Fish Guide Task Force and has advocated for a responsible sport fishing industry to achieve sustainable fisheries. He maintains that Alaska can protect and secure its fisheries while offering balanced use for commercial, sport, personal use, and subsistence uses of the commonly held public resource. He said that his experience in the fisheries issues and in the BOF process by reviewing, evaluating, and processing an extensive amount of complex information, has given him the ability to be a valuable asset.

MR. MORISKY stated that everyone who has been involved in the board process deserves respect. "Everyone," he said. The public must be heard and have their issues vetted by the board. He very much enjoys meeting the stakeholders and hearing about their concerns and needs. The BOF deliberates on numerous proposals covering many issues, he said, and one of these issues is the decline in king salmon numbers in many parts of Alaska.

Some of the most contentious proposals involve king salmon and how to manage them. The king salmon is Alaska's official state fish, made so by the legislature in 1962, a few short years after statehood. The king salmon is the most iconic fish in Alaska, Alaskans prize it and want to protect it and allow the fish to recover even if it means making sacrifices. The solution is to work through the BOF public process to review the best available science and to work with all the stakeholders to seek consensus. He said that his goal is to be part of the effort to protect, enhance, and support the statewide fisheries' resources. The BOF has done its job if future generations can look back and say that it has acted in a responsible manner while providing maximum opportunities and benefits.

[10:33:41 AM](#)

RICKY GEASE, Executive Director, Kenai River Sportfishing Association (KRSA), offered KRSA's support for the reappointment of Reed Morisky and John Jensen to the Board of Fisheries.

[10:34:15 AM](#)

PAUL SHADURA, Board Member, Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA), stated that the KPFA has been representing commercial salmon fishing in Cook Inlet since 1954. He related that membership primarily represents commercial setnet fishery families, although some members represent the processing industry, drift fisheries, suppliers, and the general public's interest. He stated KPFA's support for John Jensen, who has made an extra effort to listen to stakeholders, understand complex science, and strive for a balance of opportunities for traditional harvesters. He said that he has demonstrated his concern for conservation of fishery stocks so all Alaskans can appreciate the state's resources. The BOF's decision-making process isn't simple and can be controversial, he added, and his extensive experience in the field and prior BOF experience represents an asset. He noted that the KPFA's board supports the reappointment of John Jensen to the BOF.

PAUL SHADURA, Spokesperson, South K Beach Independent Fishermen's Association (SOKI), stated that SOKI is committed to protecting and preserving the Kasilof River system. He has been involved in Cook Inlet fisheries for over 45 years and his family has been part of the fishing community for over 100 years. He has personally participated in the BOF process for 30 years, and the board process is in need of extensive overhaul.

MR. SHADURA continued to read from a letter of April 8, 2014, as follows:

[AS] 16.05.221 (a) ... The Governor shall appoint each member on the basis of interest and public affairs, good judgment, knowledge, and the ability in the field of action of the board, and with a view to providing diversity of interest and points of view of the membership.

Mr. Morisky, in his short time on the board has not been approachable and in many instances has been extremely discriminatory against commercial setnet fishermen in Cook Inlet. Upon questioning his lack of acknowledgment to the decisions of the area's Fish and Game Advisory committees on record [Mr.] Morisky commented that the "canned" letters that represented his personal interest carried the same weight as the duly elected representative and the committee recommendations of the regional committees. [Mr.] Morisky, in his first Statewide meeting of the Board (2012) submitted an anti-commercial fishing organization's document (KRSA) as his own and when questioned he responded, "You should have your own guy put yours in."

We question the ethics of an individual that is doing the business of the people, which manages the "public trust" that only associates with members of organizations that are determined to eliminate long time setnet fishing families from Cook Inlet. We find this egregious and request this committee and the legislature to not confirm Reed Morisky.

[10:37:53 AM](#)

DAVID MARTIN, Clam Gulch, stated that he has been involved in the BOF and the Fish and Game Advisory Committee process since the early 1980s. He recommended that the legislature not confirm Reed Morisky. He spent three weeks attending the Board of Fisheries meetings on Lower Cook Inlet Finfish [December 8-11, 2013] and Upper Cook Inlet Finfish [January 31-February 15, 2014]. He said that it seemed clear to him that Mr. Morisky bases his decisions on public and political reasons and not on science or data. He expressed concern that Mr. Morisky's voting record reflects his position to allocate from commercial fisheries to the in-river commercial guide industry even though

it is detrimental to the sports industry, the resource, and the habitat. He recommended replacing this appointee with someone who will use reliable science and data to make fisheries management plans for the state's billion dollar plus fishing industry and the state's largest job producing industry. Mr. Morisky and other BOF unaccountable actions are reasons why the BOF process is flawed and harmful to the resource, the industry, and the people's livelihoods that depend upon the resource.

[10:39:28 AM](#)

CHRIS GARCIA, Kenai, urged members not to confirm Mr. Morisky. He said that Mr. Morisky is influenced by the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, which he said is really a fishing guides' association. He said he has been a sport fisherman his whole life and this organization does not represent him. He strongly opposed confirming Reed Morisky to the BOF.

MARK DUCKER, Kasilof, reiterated Mr. Garcia's testimony. He suggested that the industry on the Kenai Peninsula has been "guttled." He questioned the decisions, relating that the real issue is the early king salmon run, but the late king salmon run has met its goals. He expressed concern about the adverse effects on the commercial setnet fishery. He questioned Reed Morisky's personal agenda.

[10:41:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS moved to advance the confirmation of Susan Jeffrey, John Jensen, and Reed Morisky, appointees to the Board of Fisheries to a joint session of the House and Senate for consideration.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflect individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection. There being no objection, the confirmations were advanced.

[10:42:14 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m.