

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 13, 2017

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator John Coghill, Vice Chair
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Shelley Hughes
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Board of Fisheries

Fritz Johnson - Dillingham
John Jensen - Petersburg
Reed Morisky - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

FRITZ JOHNSON, Appointee
Dillingham, Alaska

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

JOHN JENSEN, Appointee
Petersburg, Alaska

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

REED MORISKY, Appointee
Fairbanks, Alaska

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

JENNIFER EHMANN, Chair
Mat-Su Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Morisky's re-appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

JERRY MCCUNE, lobbyist
United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported the confirmations of Fritz Johnson and John Jensen to the Board of Fisheries.

GARY HOLLIER, representing himself
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three nominations: Mr. Morisky, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Jensen.

PAUL SHADURA
South K-Beach Independent Fisherman's Association
Kasilof, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three nominees for the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

DAN DUNAWAY, representing himself
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's confirmation to the Board of Fisheries.

GAYLA HOSETH
Nushagak Advisory Committee
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

NICK SMEATON, representing himself
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

VERNER WILSON, III, Director
Natural Resources
Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA)

Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke on behalf of BBNA president and CEO Ralph Anderson in support of Fritz Johnson to the Board of Fisheries.

GARY CLINE, Regional Fisheries Director
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

ROBERT HAYANO, representing himself
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

CURT ARMSTRONG, representing himself
Dillingham, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

OLIVER HOLM, representing himself
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported John Jensen's re-appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

SUE JEFFREY, representing herself
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Fully supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

JEFF STEPHAN, lobbyist
United Fishermen's Marketing Association (UFMA)
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Strongly supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

WES HUMBYRD, representing himself
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's and John Jensen's appointments to the Board of Fisheries, but not Reed Morisky.

DAVID HILLSTRAND, representing himself
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Fritz Johnson's and John Jensen's appointments to the Board of Fisheries, but not Reed Morisky.

MALCOLM MILNE, President
North Pacific Fisheries Association (NPFA)
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported John Jensen's appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

IAN PITZMAN, representing himself
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson, especially Mr. Jensen.

ARNE THOMSON, contractor/consultant
Alaska Salmon Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson.

AL BARRETTE, representing himself
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Reed Morisky's appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:25 PM](#)

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Stedman, Von Imhof, Wielechowski, Hughes, and Chair Giessel. Senator Coghill came in shortly thereafter.

Confirmation Hearings: Board of Fisheries

[3:30:57 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of the appointees to the Board of Fisheries. She said the Board of Fisheries' main role is to conserve and develop the fishery resources of the state. It is charged with setting seasons and bag limits and methods and means for the state's subsistence, commercial, sport, guided sport, and personal use fisheries. It also involves setting policies and directions for the management of the state's fishery resources.

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SENATOR MEYER joined the committee.

CHAIR GIESSEL said the board is charged with making allocative decisions and is responsible for management based on those decisions. It has a three-year meeting cycle that generally occurs from October through March. It uses the biological and socio-economic information provided by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), public comment received from people inside and outside the state, and guidance from the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Department of Law (DOL) when creating regulations that are sound and enforceable.

CHAIR GIESSEL welcomed Fritz Johnson from Dillingham to the committee saying he would be a re-appointment to the board with his term beginning, on July 1 and go through June 30, 2020.

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FRITZ JOHNSON, Dillingham, Alaska, said he is interested in serving another term on the Board of Fisheries and is "vastly more qualified" now, because he already served on the board for three years and has a good idea of the fisheries beyond his personal experience.

MR. JOHNSON said he had fished in Bristol Bay since 1979 and loves the business. Alaska is uniquely blessed with the breadth and depth of its fisheries.

SENATOR COGHILL said he appreciated him serving on this board and asked him to share some surprising or instructive things he has heard that are different than the Bristol Bay fishery.

MR. JOHNSON replied that he wasn't surprised so much about the differences between fisheries, but just about how wide and deep Alaska's fisheries are. He was tutored by experienced board members and the department during his first term and the information provided was very professional. He expected it. He also found the passions of the different stakeholders in the state made him realize how hard a balance would be to achieve. But he wasn't surprised.

[3:36:14 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES thanked him for being here today and she was concerned about how the recent decision regarding the corridor will impact the Susitna drainage that contains the Yentna and Knik rivers. Eight of the 14 stocks of concern are there and even though progress was being made, the board still decided to increase fishing time for the commercial drift fishermen. She

thought his vote was supposed to be for sustainability and not allocation and asked him to comment on that decision.

MR. JOHNSON responded that adding one day of fishing to the drift fleet was less significant than creating those corridors in the first place, and the year following their implementation the returns into the areas she is describing seem to have increased. However, he couldn't tell her if the same kinds of increases were observed in the two following years. Other factors come into play, he added. For instance, run strength and timing have a lot to do with whether these fish will be accessible to the drift fleet, dip netters, or sports fishermen.

The board made the decision that seemed most appropriate based upon the information presented at the time. Sustainability is the board's primary mission.

He said there have often been discussions of lengthening the time between meetings and maybe it makes sense, because more time is needed to see if a particular action made a difference. Fish and Mother Nature often make their own decisions, which are out of human control. Those stocks bear close attention. He repeated that the board's main mission is sustainability.

SENATOR HUGHES thanked him for that explanation, but her understanding is that escapement goals hadn't been reached but things were improving and that making a change at this time was concerning.

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MR. JOHNSON said he couldn't respond to the particulars, but other factors make managing wild stocks difficult, like run strength and timing. Price makes a difference, too.

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SENATOR VON IMHOF said she wanted to know if he is the same Fritz Johnson who received a violation for fishing for salmon using a drift gillnet in the Nushigak district in June 29, 2015.

MR. JOHNSON said he is the same Fritz Johnson. It was an honest mistake and embarrassing at the time, but "Shame on me if it ever happens again." He had been fishing for quite some time and he was under the sincere impression that the fishing period closed at 6:30 when in fact it closed at 6:00.

CHAIR GIESSEL thanked him and asked him to stay in the room. She welcomed John Jensen saying he is the current Board of Fisheries chair.

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JOHN JENSEN, representing himself, Petersburg, Alaska, said he is 66 years old and had spent most of his life commercial fishing. He is a partially retired commercial fisherman and rents small boats to sport fishermen, campers, subsistence fishermen, whale watchers, and hunters out of Petersburg. He completed two years of college before he went back to commercial fishing. He is trying to do the very best job he can.

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SENATOR HUGHES thanked him for his service and his desire to continue serving. She asked him to comment on her earlier question about the decision regarding the Cook Inlet corridor. She is concerned with the board's votes having more to do with allocation than sustainability. Craig Medred wrote an article saying that Mr. Jensen conceded the corridor appeared to be working, but he thought that commercial fishermen paid too high a price in lost catch.

MR. JENSEN said he probably did say that, but when they opened that area for one 12-hour fishing period in July fishermen told the managers they would rather have the opening in the third week than the fourth, which generally has a lot more coho salmon going through, and those are designated predominantly for sport fishing. The reason the opening was put in that week was to target some of the sockeyes using ADF&G data. Cutting their time back year after year has seemed to help conservation as well as culvert and habitat restoration and pike eradication. The board is very cognizant of the stocks of concern up there.

He said it was an allocative decision, one of the thoughts being that they had paid a good chunk of the price of conservation efforts and it was prudent to let them fish one 12-hour period a week next year. The department says it's a "may" and not a "shall." So they don't have to open it up if conservation measures are needed.

SENATOR HUGHES said the Mat-Su Borough Wildlife Commission felt they were "dealt quite a blow," and asked him to consider that.

MR. JENSEN said the department has that in mind. He knows the people on the commission up there and respects them all. This

was not an easy decision, but he did it because he thought it would be sustainable.

SENATOR STEDMAN asked him to remind the committee what the vote was on the Board of Fisheries.

[3:49:08 PM](#)

MR. JENSEN replied that he wasn't quite sure, but it was maybe 5X2.

CHAIR GIESSEL clarified that there seems to be unanimous thought the vote was 4X3.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he was very disappointed in the Mat-Su vote. For years the salmon return has plummeted and asked him if he thought the corridor was clearly working.

MR. JENSEN answered yes it is working, but at the expense of the commercial fishermen. He clarified that he wants sustainable salmon for Alaskans, but sometimes they have to make difficult allocative decisions.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what takes priority: the returns of the fish or the commercial fishermen.

MR. JENSEN said the fish always come first: reproduction, subsistence, and then on down the line for the different user groups.

[3:51:09 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if this would have an impact on the fish that return to the Valley.

MR. JENSEN answered the department's information indicated that it would have a small impact, maybe up to 50,000 fish, but he wasn't sure about that number.

[3:51:59 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said according to ADF&G estimates that means 50,000 sockeye that are normally going through the corridor are now allocated to the drift fishery. Does that sound right?

MR. JENSEN said he didn't remember that number, but it sounds reasonable.

[3:52:32 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said that several hundred thousand people live in the Anchorage Bowl and the Mat-Su Valley and that is a lot of lost opportunity for the sport fishermen and possibly the dipnetters.

MR. JENSEN answered that may be a fair representation, but he didn't know how the fish split up. A portion of them going up the Kenai and Kasilof river systems will turn around and come back down to, also, and those systems have been over-escaping themselves for quite some time.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if there was a proposal to amend the area open to dip netting from the shore in the Kenai River.

MR. JENSEN answered that he believed there might have been several proposals and several to also extend the fishing period by two weeks. But the board didn't make any significant changes for the dip net fishery.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said there have been a lot of concerns from his constituents about the lack of fish that have been available for dip netters and for sport fishermen in the Kenai and Kasilof area. He asked if the board under his leadership took any action to increase the fish available for dip netters or sport fishermen in the Kenai or Kasilof rivers.

MR. JENSEN answered not at this meeting, but they have in the past taken those actions by creating windows and closed periods for the commercial fishermen who have a prescriptive 36-hour closed period on Thursday through Friday to get fish into the river for the weekend, as well as a prescriptive closure on Tuesday.

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SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI commented that Mr. Jensen didn't take any action to increase the fish available for sport fishermen and dip netters despite the many complaints, and asked if he took any actions to increase the number of fish that were available for commercial fishermen or set netters in the Kenai/Cook Inlet region.

MR. JENSEN replied that the board took off a "1-percent rule" on the set netters, because they have been hardest hit and the sockeyes have been running a little later in the last couple of years, but that seemed like an anomaly. They tried to give the set netters a little more opportunity, but whether they get the

time or not depends on how the late run of Kenai River King salmon comes in.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked him to clarify what the "1-percent rule" is.

MR. JENSEN answered that it's hard to explain, but if the commercial fisheries' catch in the last two weeks of July is less than 1 percent of the total run they don't get any extra opportunity. The reason they took that off the table was because in his mind it was an unfair advantage to the Kenai and Kasilof rivers fishermen. Setnetters were severely restricted by that rule, because a lot of them leave to go to their other jobs. Cook Inlet is not one of the biggest commercial fishing areas and has an over-prescription of permits. Most people have other jobs in order to support their fishing habit.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the 1 percent rule has been in place for 40 years.

MR. JENSEN answered he could didn't know.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if getting rid of the 1 percent rule would increase the number of fish available for sport fishermen or decrease them.

MR. JENSEN said the biggest concern the board had during that time was the increase in catch of commercial silver salmon. They also considered that the commercial folks with the 1 percent rule caught around 3 percent of the silvers going into the Kenai River.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI surmised that the 1 percent rule makes more silvers available for the commercial fishermen.

MR. JENSEN answered that is quite possible for silver salmon, but their past catches haven't been that great.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said by contrast that means less silvers of the already few that get through for sport fishermen.

MR. JENSEN answered that was a possibility.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked him to explain what "paired restrictions" are and if those had been changed on the Kenai River.

[4:00:10 PM](#)

MR. JENSEN answered that there is no set net fishing during the early runs, so paired restrictions have a lot to do with the late run king salmon on the Kenai River. A paired restriction is if the runs are so low that the sport fishermen or the guided sport fishermen are fishing non-retention and no bait, then the set netters on the outside get reduced time or no time at all. They are given 12 hours a week unless there is a serious shortage of King salmon, and then they lose that time. They have sat on the beach for up to 12 openings.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI surmised that the board weakened the commercial fish component of the paired restrictions in the Kenai River.

MR. JENSEN answered he didn't think the board did.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said the board removed any King salmon conservation measures in August for the commercial set net fishery.

MR. JENSEN responded that actually by the time it matters in late July or early August the majority of late run King salmon in the Kenai River are past. Some are left, but not many.

[4:02:05 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the King salmon conservation measures the board made for the commercial set net fishery increased or decreased the number of King salmon that got into the Kasilof River.

MR. JENSEN replied that according to the ADF&G, it didn't make any significant change.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the board increased or decreased the area that was available for dipnetting in the Kenai River.

MR. JENSEN replied that they gave some extra areas to dipnetters.

[4:03:05 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said as he understands it, they changed the dipnetting areas in the Kenai River from the upstream to the downstream side of the Warren Ames Bridge to align at the mouth of the Kenai River from No Name Creek on the north shore to an ADF&G regulatory marker on the south shore.

MR. JENSEN responded that he believed that was accurate. That was a combination of a department proposal and an individual proposal. He added that it is a more convenient area for people to fish, at the same time recognizing the habitat damage happening around the Warren Ames Bridge area.

4:03:59 PM

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked where the dipnet area was added.

MR. JENSEN said he couldn't say off the top of his head. There were over 160 proposals.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he wanted to get that information, because his understanding is that no more dipnetting area was added. He asked if the closing of that area is likely to further crowd dip netters into the area down by the mouth.

MR. JENSEN said he would have to refer to his notes for that information.

4:05:03 PM

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he is concerned about escapement of King salmon in the Kasilof River and if he thinks action needs to be taken to have sonar put in place to count returning King salmon there.

MR. JENSEN replied that sonar is a very valuable tool that he encourages the department to use. He added that they changed an early run regulation the department had into something quite a bit different on a 7X1 vote to let more large fish on the early run King salmon go up the Kenai River. He thought that was one of the best things they did at the whole meeting.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the closing of that area for dip netting was done for habitat reasons, and if some fish plants are in the area that are impacting it.

MR. JENSEN replied that he believes there is one fish plant up that way, but he wasn't sure it was functioning. He knows that a couple of plants went out of business and that could have been one of them.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what habitat concerns ADF&G had in the Warren Ames Bridge area.

MR. JENSEN answered mainly foot traffic from fishermen and duck hunters leading to sloughing on the bank.

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further questions, thanked Mr. Jensen and asked him to stay on line.

CHAIR GIESSEL welcomed Mr. Reed Morisky. He was first appointed to the board in 2013.

[4:08:41 PM](#)

REED MORISKY, Fairbanks Alaska, said he had been on the board for almost four years. He recently retired from the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) as a project manager. He has been a sport fishing guide since 1984.

As a Board of Fisheries member, he has brought an attitude of respect and fairness to the process, he said. Alaska is unique in how the Boards of Fisheries and Game are configured and he is honored to be able to assist residents in having access to a regulatory and allocative process. He enjoys meeting all the stakeholders and hearing their concerns. At his core he believes they can disagree without being disagreeable. He has a proven track record for taking a reasonable and rational approach to his decision-making.

[4:10:15 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL said the top half of the Kenai Peninsula used to be her district and she heard from those folks that the board hadn't had a meeting there in quite some time. Has the board been meeting there?

MR. MORISKY answered that the board votes on locations, and the last time the vote came up it was very contentious, and Anchorage was selected. It was contentious after that and the vote was to keep it in Anchorage. He added that folks in Mat-Su/Wasilla/Palmer are stakeholders, too. Anchorage is a neutral location, because it is central. Frankly, a lot of the Anchorage audience is from the Kenai, but they also get folks from the Mat-Su. The board had a work session in Soldotna last October in which it took public testimony, he added.

[4:12:51 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL thanked him for his willingness to serve on the board. For him the Interior waterways is a forgotten world where some of the fish end up but not in the same volumes as Bristol Bay or the Kenai area. He asked what Mr. Morisky could bring that may be valuable to those Interior waterways.

MR. MORISKY answered that he has a family member who has been in and out of the commercial fishing industry for over three decades, but he has been in the Interior for over 35 years. He understands the up-river perspective and it is important to him, because they are 600-700 miles from salt water and by the time the fish get up there everybody else has gotten to them from trawlers to seals.

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CHAIR GIESSEL opened public comment.

[4:16:34 PM](#)

JENNIFER EHMANN, Chair, Mat-Su Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC), Palmer, Alaska, said the committee voted unanimously to support Mr. Morisky's re-appointment to the Board of Fisheries. She recognized all the dedication and hard work the Board of Fisheries members give to this critical process and thanked them for their service. The AC has not had the opportunity to discuss other re-appointments, but plan to do so in up-coming meetings.

[4:17:39 PM](#)

JERRY MCCUNE, United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA), Juneau, Alaska, supported the confirmations of Fritz Johnson and John Jensen to the Board of Fisheries. He had known Mr. Jensen for a long time and he is the most senior member on the board. He always seems to be fair and open and listens well. Mr. Johnson has already been on the board that has a big learning curve. So he has a good start. It takes probably six years to go around the state and get experience in all the different areas. They both have a lot of experience across the state.

[4:19:20 PM](#)

GARY HOLLIER, representing himself, Kenai, Alaska, said he is an East Side set netter, and supported all three nominations: Mr. Morisky, Mr. Johnson, and Mr. Jensen. He doesn't agree on a whole lot of issues with Mr. Morisky, but he makes himself available and that is appreciated. He dealt with Mr. Johnson at the February 14th meeting and found that he has the ability to analyze the data and articulate his votes up or down. He would also make a good member especially after already serving three years.

MR. HOLLIER said the most important appointment is Mr. Jensen. Among his other abilities, as chairman, he has frequently demonstrated the ability to control a board meeting that is very contentious.

[4:21:40 PM](#)

PAUL SHADURA, representing, South K-Beach Independent Fisherman's Association, Kasilof, Alaska, supported all three nominees for the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. Even though the association didn't have all their concerns addressed in the recent Cook Inlet meeting, they felt the issues that were addressed were discussed in an open, clear, and transparent process. The board offered considerable time for the public to testify and allowed additional comments to clarify issues within the committee as a whole. The AC representatives were given additional time to express their voice for their respective communities. The board thoroughly discussed and debated several management plans. Decisions were carefully crafted to balance and adjust critical management plans with the goal of high sustained yield. The board is tasked with conserving and developing strong healthy productive runs and ensuring a reasonable access to all residents of Alaska.

[4:23:14 PM](#)

DAN DUNAWAY, representing himself, Dillingham, Alaska, supported Fritz Johnson's confirmation to the Board of Fisheries. Mr. Dunaway said he is a lifelong Alaskan and a 28-year resident of Dillingham; he sits on the Nushigak Advisory Committee and the Bristol Bay Federal Subsistence Rural Council. He spent time with Mr. Johnson on his boat during his work with university and found him very thoughtful. He is well-respected by the community. He is fair and ethical, and is capable of balanced decisions. He doesn't have a preference for any user group; he is respectful of and appreciates all of them.

[4:24:35 PM](#)

GAYLA HOSETH, Nushagak Advisory Committee (AC), Dillingham, Alaska, supported Fritz Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries. She explained that representatives for the Nushagak AC were selected from the residents of the many villages in its area that are the most respected for their knowledge and local uses of the fish and wildlife resources. At the March 10th meeting they voted unanimously to support Fritz Johnson. He is a long-time resident of Dillingham and is well known and highly respected for his work throughout the Bristol Bay region as a commercial fisherman, former journalist, media director at the Bristol Bay Native Association, former regional fisheries director for the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation and current director of Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute.

During the Nushagak AC meeting several members spoke of Mr. Johnson's extensive experience in the Bristol Bay commercial fishery and his widespread respect among the regional fishermen. With his previous board experience, Mr. Johnson already understands the nuances of many fisheries which can help him to fully address highly complex fishery issues.

[4:26:36 PM](#)

NICK SMEATON, representing himself, Dillingham, Alaska, supported Fritz Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries. Mr. Smeaton said he was a lifelong fisherman in Bristol Bay as had many generations before him and had known Fritz for many years and had fished beside him. He is very considerate of everyone out there in the fisheries. He has a lot of different ideas, but he listens to everybody first.

MR. SMEATON said he also had a fishing violation many years ago, but he never had another one.

[4:27:52 PM](#)

VERNER WILSON, III, Director, Natural Resources, Bristol Bay Native Association (BBNA), Dillingham, Alaska, said he was speaking on behalf of the president and CEO, Ralph Anderson, in support of Fritz Johnson to the Board of Fisheries. His appointment will be in keeping with BBNA's resolution 2016-03, entitled "A Resolution in Support of Keeping a Bristol Bay Region Seat on the Alaska Board of Fisheries" passed by the full board of directors last year. Among other things, it states that the membership of BBNA is of 31 federally recognized tribal governments in the region, the watershed of the Bristol Bay Region that supports the world's most prolific wild salmon runs. It says:

Our commercial fisheries in Bristol Bay typically supply almost half of the world's wild sockeye salmon. Bristol Bay's fishery alone represented nearly one-third of the total Alaska salmon harvest value. It supported 12,000 fishing jobs important to Alaskans around the state. And since 1975, recognizing the importance of Bristol Bay's fisheries to the state, Alaska's leaders have traditionally designated at least one of seven seats on the Board of Fisheries as a member connected with the Bristol Bay Region. BBNA recognizes the importance of the Alaska Board of Fisheries to the regulation and well-being of our region's fisheries.

MR. WILSON said the board passed this resolution in 2016, but no one from Bristol Bay was appointed, which lead to the passing of this resolution.

[4:30:08 PM](#)

GARY CLINE, Regional Fisheries Director, Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, Dillingham, Alaska, supported Mr. Johnson's appointment to the Board of Fisheries. Mr. Cline said he grew up as a commercial fisherman, sport fisherman, and subsistence fisher. He would love the salmon fisheries to remain a cornerstone of his livelihood as well as the residents of Bristol Bay. It's crucial to have a local Bristol Bay fisherman seated on the board who has experience and knowledge of all five commercial within the Bristol Bay region.

MR. CLINE said he was privileged to attend the last Bristol Bay fin fish meeting and the Alaska Peninsula Fin Fish Meeting and he admired Mr. Johnson's due diligence to engage with all the other user groups to absorb all their knowledge so he can make fair, unbiased, and concise decisions.

[4:32:01 PM](#)

ROBERT HAYANO, representing himself, Dillingham, Alaska, supported all three appointees: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. From attending past meetings he found all three gentlemen to be very accessible to the public, which is a key element in this successful process. He felt they did their due diligence in reviewing all the information before and during the meeting and made informed decisions even though he didn't always agree with them. It is very important to keep experienced people on the board, because Alaska's fisheries are a very complex resource.

[4:33:31 PM](#)

CURT ARMSTRONG, representing himself, Dillingham, Alaska, supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. He has attended a few board meetings and found them all to be receptive to listening to all sides of a contentious issue and coming up with workable solutions.

[4:35:02 PM](#)

OLIVER HOLM, representing himself, Kodiak, Alaska, supported John Jensen's reappointment to the Board of Fisheries. Mr. Holm who had been on the Kodiak AC for 27 years and had other fisheries experience, found Mr. Jensen very knowledgeable about the board's policies; he is very approachable and an excellent

chairman. The board needs someone with a broad experience in the state's fisheries beyond salmon and fresh water fisheries.

[4:36:13 PM](#)

SUE JEFFREY, representing herself, Kodiak, Alaska, fully supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. She said she is currently on the Board of Fisheries and has served with all three appointees and that Alaska's fisheries are broad reaching and complex. Mr. Jensen's long service on the board and his institutional memory is especially valuable to the state during challenging times. She knows all three would take conservation into consideration first and foremost. All three care very sincerely about the health of the resource and understand its importance to all the users. They will ensure a thorough and transparent process.

[4:38:37 PM](#)

JEFF STEPHAN, United Fishermen's Marketing Association (UFMA), Kodiak, Alaska, strongly supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. Mr. Stephan said he attended his first Board of Fisheries meeting in November 1978 and has interacted with and observed the board and its members since then on a broad variety of issues and challenges. He found the current board with the addition of Fritz Johnson has some of the best balanced, informed, and dedicated members he has seen. The State of Alaska should be proud of the way the Board of Fisheries has conducted themselves. They don't always agree, but that is what is needed in a body like that. They come with different perspectives, but always work very diligently towards principals of sustainability and good management. They are all intelligent individuals and clearly dedicated to environmentally sound management principals of sustainability.

[4:41:50 PM](#)

WES HUMBYRD, representing himself, Homer, Alaska, supported Fritz Johnson's and John Jensen's appointments to the Board of Fisheries, but not Reed Morisky. Mr. Humbyrd is a commercial drifter and doesn't want Mr. Morisky on the board, because he never agrees with anything that happens in Cook Inlet. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Jensen are both approachable, and even though they don't always agree, their differences are based on science. The fisheries should be managed on escapement goals and sustained yield.

MR. HUMBYRD said the Cook Inlet has a problem and it's in the Mat-Su Valley where 135 lakes are infested with pike. So the sockeye salmon are being allocated into the Mat-Su Valley for the non-resident sport fishermen but the pike eat them.

4:43:30 PM

DAVID HILLSTRAND, representing himself, Homer, Alaska, supported Fritz Johnson's and John Jensen's appointments to the Board of Fisheries, but not Reed Morisky. The definition of "conservation" is the wise use of our resources without wasting them, he said and suggested having a standard and criteria for any board member that is nominated.

He explained that the allocation of Cook Inlet fish to the personal use and the sport fishers has led to waste of many fish. He said 2-7 million chum salmon are not being caught, 2-10 million pink salmon are not getting caught, and for five out of six years, 500,000-plus sockeye have not been caught; that is waste in his eyes.

4:45:36 PM

MALCOLM MILNE, President, North Pacific Fisheries Association (NPFA), Homer, Alaska, supported John Jensen's appointment to the Board of Fisheries. He explained that NPFA members are a multi-gear, multi-species commercial fishing organization based in Homer. It represents over 50 family fishing operations and the members participate in many fisheries throughout the state from Southeast to the Bering Sea. NPFA has participated in the board process since in 1955. Members respect Mr. Jensen and know him to be a considerate and informed board member. He has served since 2003 and his institutional knowledge and historical perspective are quite valuable. Although the association has not always agreed with Mr. Jensen's decisions, he has always been respectful and listened to all sides of an issue.

4:47:27 PM

IAN PITZMAN, representing himself, Homer, Alaska, supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson, especially Mr. Jensen. Mr. Pitzman said he is drifter in Cook Inlet and is involved in the cod fishery in the Gulf of Alaska and the Bering Sea. He also operates a crab boat in the Bering Sea. However, he had focused his comments on John Jensen saying that he has seen Mr. Jensen in many different meetings and believes his best asset is his broad understanding of the varied fisheries in areas around the state, both sport fisheries and commercial fisheries. While he doesn't always agree with Mr. Jensen's positions, his

discussions, and his reasoning using the best available science in explaining how he votes, makes him easy to understand.

He said Mr. Jensen is a great advocate for the state and the fisheries resources and a fair judge of allocation. He asked them to remember that the commercial fishery in Alaska is a multi-billion dollar business and it needs regulators that understand the business. He closed by asking the committee to forward all three names.

4:49:10 PM

ARNE THOMSON, contractor/consultant, Alaska Salmon Alliance, Anchorage, Alaska, supported all three appointees to the Board of Fisheries: John Jensen, Reed Morisky, and Fritz Johnson. He has personally and professionally known Mr. Jensen for over 25 years and he is a man with diversified fisheries experience who has a refreshing spirit of respect and collaboration.

MR. THOMSON said he respects the knowledge and balance of interests that Mr. Morisky brings to the board.

Finally, they appreciate the fact that Fritz Johnson from Dillingham has agreed to come back and serve on the board. He is a man of integrity with extensive fisheries experience and is already established his collaborative, cooperative, and respectful nature.

4:51:00 PM

AL BARRETTE, representing himself, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported Reed Morisky's appointment to the Board of Fisheries. Before he was even a board member, Mr. Morisky would attend the AC meetings in Fairbanks. Since he has been a board member, he almost religiously attends the AC meetings. He listens and is able to answer questions with good detail on why the board took certain actions. It is excellent to have an end-user on the board.

CHAIR GIESSEL, finding no further comments, closed public testimony. She stated the following:

In accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Resources Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be forwarded to a joint session for consideration: Board of Fisheries: Fritz Johnson from Dillingham, John Jensen from Petersburg, and Reed Morisky from Fairbanks.

This does not reflect an intent by any of the members to vote for or against the confirmation of the individuals during any further sessions.

4:53:25 PM

CHAIR GIESSEL adjourned the Senate Resources Committee meeting at 4:53 p.m.