

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 2, 2025

1:05 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Robyn Niayuq Burke, Co-Chair  
Representative Maxine Dibert, Co-Chair  
Representative Carolyn Hall  
Representative Donna Mears  
Representative Zack Fields  
Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative George Rauscher  
Representative Julie Coulombe

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Bill Elam

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Board of Game

Al Barrette - Fairbanks  
Carri Ann Mueller - Palmer

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Fisheries

Olivia Henaayee Irwin - Nenana  
Tom Carpenter - Cordova

Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission

Rick Green - Anchorage

HOUSE BILL NO. 125

"An Act relating to membership of the Board of Fisheries."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 125

SHORT TITLE: BOARD OF FISHERIES MEMBERSHIP

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) JIMMIE

03/05/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/05/25	(H)	FSH, RES
03/18/25	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/18/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/18/25	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
03/25/25	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
03/25/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/25/25	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
04/08/25	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
04/08/25	(H)	Moved CSHB 125(FSH) Out of Committee
04/08/25	(H)	MINUTE(FSH)
04/09/25	(H)	FSH RPT CS(FSH) 4DP 2NR
04/09/25	(H)	DP: KOPP, EDGMON, MCCABE, STUTES
04/09/25	(H)	NR: VANCE, HIMSCHOOT
04/28/25	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
04/28/25	(H)	Heard & Held
04/28/25	(H)	MINUTE(RES)
05/02/25	(H)	RES AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

ALLEN (AL) BARRETTE, Appointee

Board of Game

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's re-appointment to the Board of Game.

CARRI ANN MUELLER, Appointee

Board of Game

Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's appointee to the Board of Game.

OLIVIA HENAAYEE IRWIN, Appointee

Board of Fisheries

Nenana, Alaska

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

TOM CARPENTER, Appointee

Board of Fisheries

Cordova, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's re-appointment to the Board of Fisheries.

RICK GREEN, Appointee  
Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's appointee to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

CHUCK DERRICK, president  
Chitina Dipnetters Association  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment of Al Barrette to the Board of Game, Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries, and in opposition to the appointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

DAVID POLUSHKIN, representing self  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the reappointment Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director  
Resident Hunters of Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment of Carrie Ann Mueller to the Board of Game, the reappointment of Al Barrette to the Board of Game, the appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries, and in opposition to the appointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

ROD ARNO, Policy Director  
Alaska Outdoor Council  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to the appointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

CRAIG THYTHLOOK, Fisheries Policy Director  
Native Peoples Action  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries.

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR, representing self  
North Pole, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment of Rick Green to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, the

reappointment of Al Barrette to the Board of Game, the appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries, and in opposition to the reappointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

RHONDA PITKA, Chief  
Village of Beaver  
Beaver, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries.

JARED DANIELSON, representing self  
Port Muller, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the reappointment Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries.

JOEL JACKSON, President  
Organized Village of Kake  
Kake, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of the appointment Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries.

CHUCK DERRICK, President  
Chitina Dipnetters Association  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of amendments 3 and 4 to HB 125.

KAREN LINNELL, Executive Director  
Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission  
Glenallen, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 125.

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director  
Resident Hunters of Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified regarding hunting and fishing opportunities for Alaskans.

ROD ARNO, Policy Director  
Alaska Outdoor Council  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 125, including Amendment 4 and Amendment 6.

CRAIG THYTHLOOK, Fisheries Policy Director  
Native Peoples Action

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 125.

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Owner  
Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified regarding the importance of having a science seat on the Board of Fisheries.

JAMES SIMON, representing self  
Salcha, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 125.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:05:07 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR ROBYN NIAYUK BURKE** called the House Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Dibert, Hall, Mears, Fields, Saddler, Rauscher, Coulombe, and Burke were present at the call to order.

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

**Board of Game**

**Board of Fisheries**

**Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission**

[1:05:39 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the first order of business would be consideration of governor's appointees to the Board of Game, the Board of Fisheries, and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

[1:06:20 PM](#)

ALLEN (AL) BARRETTE, Appointee, Board of Game, explained that he is a re-appointment to the Board of Game. He described his resume, explaining that he had a good understanding of urban and rural matters and could provide historical background for many wildlife issues from around the state. He said that his knowledge of conservation, biology, and subsistence would be an asset to the board. He made it a practice to attend advisory boards, study matters prior to board meetings, listen to people presenting to the board, and look beyond the data to what users are seeing on the landscape. He described his decisions as consistent and based on science or the best data available. He said he would continue to learn, support the best public process

for management for both consumptive and non-consumptive users, and make science-based decisions.

[1:09:19 PM](#)

MR. BARRETTE responded to a question from Representative Saddler by explaining he learned that information needed to make decisions regarding proposals often requires additional research.

[1:10:17 PM](#)

MR. BARRETTE addressed several questions posed by Representative Hall, explaining that he grew up on a dairy farm in Wisconsin and learned about select breeding processes. Regarding his interest in lead poisoning, he explained that his wife was a falconer, and falcons are very responsive to lead. One little lead pellet can kill a falcon. He had been studying the issue of lead that is present in bullets in order to protect wild raptors in Alaska.

[1:12:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE introduced the next appointee to the Board of Game, Carri Ann Mueller

[1:12:47 PM](#)

CARRI ANN MUELLER, Appointee, Board of Game, summarized her resume and explained her belief that public involvement is a critical voice. She described her experience hunting in 14 of the 26 game units in Alaska and highlighted her work helping women and youth learn basic hunting skills. She said she is committed to following the science and data from Alaska's fish and game biologists and staff, listening to input from the wildlife troopers, and reviewing the recommendations from the 84 advisory committees and user groups who enjoy the outdoors.

[1:18:25 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the committee would hear the appointees for the Board of Fisheries.

[1:19:05 PM](#)

OLIVIA HENAAYEE IRWIN, Appointee, Board of Fisheries, summarized her resume, highlighting her personal experience with fishing,

her education in state and federal management and policy, and her work with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and Doyon. She described the value of the public process, the importance of promoting healthy Alaska fish stock, and how decisions should be made based on science and input by stakeholders. She said she would like to work to preserve and protect the resources of Alaska's fisheries.

[1:22:57 PM](#)

MS. IRWIN, in response to several questions from Representative Saddler, reviewed her coursework and degrees as well as her Alaska residency.

[1:24:35 PM](#)

MS. IRWIN responded to a question from Representative Mears by explaining that she was an appointee to a board seat which would represent all users in Alaska. If HB 125 passed and there were designated seats, she would probably fill a subsistence seat. She emphasized that as a Board of Fish member, she would represent all user groups across Alaska.

[1:26:46 PM](#)

MS. IRWIN addressed Representative Saddler's concern about her age and her ability to deal with the intricacies and complexities of fish management on the board. She explained that she was young but had built no loyalty to any specific user group. She didn't believe she had all answers but that the public has a lot of those answers, and she is ready to listen and learn from users that are on the ground, from the network of people she has developed, and her fellow board members. She reiterated that her decisions would represent all user groups.

[1:30:02 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the committee would consider the re-appointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fish.

[1:30:29 PM](#)

TOM CARPENTER, Appointee, Board of Fisheries, summarized his experience and described recent additions to his resume including being Vice Chair of the Board of Fisheries and serving on the herring revitalization committee and the Alaska salmon research task force. He discussed why he sought re-appointment,

explaining that he has been involved with the board of fisheries for about 25 years. He pointed out the contentious issues in the state and the importance of working with different user groups. He described several situations and how he helped worked to solve problems and reach compromise. He also discussed herring fisheries and how to utilize the resource in new ways.

[1:38:30 PM](#)

MR. CARPENTER responded to Representative Hall's question about resource conservation in trawling by pointing out that most Alaska trawling fisheries take place in federal waters, and the board had little jurisdiction over trawling. For trawlers in Alaska waters, he advocated electric monitoring or on-board monitors though these programs are not sufficiently funded. He pointed out the importance of avoiding bycatch of salmon and rock fish. He referred to a specific situation that occurred in Prince William Sound.

[1:41:30 PM](#)

MR. CARPENTER addressed a question posed by Representative Saddler regarding the challenges faced on the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers. He explained that reasons for declining salmon stocks include a disease some king salmon carry; the dual management problem between the U.S. and Canada; the bycatch issue; escapement numbers for chum salmon; climate change and water temperatures; and the smolt survival in intertidal waters. He said that he has been working with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) on ways to approach these problems.

[1:45:57 PM](#)

MR. CARPENTER, in response to a question from Representative Mears regarding HB 125, posited that board membership had staunch support for subsistence users.

[1:48:12 PM](#)

MR. CARPENTER responded to a question from Co-Chair Burke regarding HB 33 and board members who are conflicted out. He explained that when board members were required to sit out discussions because of conflicts, the board missed the opportunity to get knowledge from someone who is often better informed than other board members. He agreed that they should

not vote on issues, but they should be able to deliberate and engage with the public.

[1:51:08 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the committee would consider the appointment of Rick Green to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

[1:51:07 PM](#)

RICK GREEN, Appointee, Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, explained that he had always loved to fish and that influenced his not only his recreational activities but also his professional life. He described his fishing and guiding experience as well as his work in radio, his employment by environmental and engineering firms, and his appointment to ADF&G by Governor Dunleavy. He said he was planning to retire but instead decided to seek appointment to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC). He pointed out how his personal and professional experience would make him an excellent member of the CFEC.

[1:58:21 PM](#)

MR. GREEN, in response to a question by Representative Saddler, described the work of the CFEC, explaining that it is a regulatory and quasi-judicial body that oversees the commercial fishing industry for the state of Alaska which is nearly a 6-billion-dollar part of the state economy. He described the work as including tracking the economics, issuing commercial fishing permits, conducting research, adjudicating hearings, and determining whether a fishery would stay open or be limited. The focus has been on economics and a sustained yield principal.

[2:02:24 PM](#)

MR. GREEN addressed a question posed by Representative Hall regarding his transition from conservative radio talk show host to public servant. He explained that he worked hard at everything he did, and he had planned to continue as a radio show host. Then he had a heart attack, and at that point he took inventory of his life. He decided he wanted to make a difference, so he began to pursue a life of public service. He mentioned the perception that bureaucrats just sit around marking time and getting fat, but that was not his experience

with ADF&G. He spoke about ADF&G and other agencies who worked hard and had passion for their work.

[2:06:38 PM](#)

MR. GREEN responded to Representative Raucher's question about HB 33, explaining that he hadn't looked at the details.

[2:08:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE opened public testimony on the governor's appointees to the Board of Game, the Board of Fisheries, and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

[2:09:30 PM](#)

CHUCK DERRICK, president, Chitina Dipnetters Association, spoke in support of the confirmation of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries and in opposition to the reappointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries. He explained that Ms. Irwin met with the Chitina Dipnetters Association, and she answered questions about the personal use fishery. He said the association opposed the confirmation of to Tom Carpenter as he does not have an open mind to other fisheries besides commercial fishing. He also spoke in support of the confirmation of Al Barrette noting Mr. Barrette's extensive knowledge of statutes and regulations.

[2:11:13 PM](#)

DAVID POLUSHKIN, representing self, spoke in support of the reappointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries, explaining that Mr. Carpenter was approachable by all types of fishermen and is knowledgeable about fisheries around the state.

[2:12:19 PM](#)

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director, Resident Hunters of Alaska, as executive director of the Resident Hunters of Alaska, spoke in support of Carrie Ann Mueller to the Board of Game, explaining that she was an avid hunter, a pilot, and well aware of the issues on the ground. She has been involved in hunter education and in introducing more women to hunting. He also spoke in support of Al Barrette, citing his extensive experience and his understanding of the issues, but he stressed that the board should not have so many guides on the board. He also offered testimony, from a personal standpoint, in support of the

appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries, explaining that he was impressed with her knowledge of fish and game issues and her tenacity in learning more about the problems facing the fisheries. He said she is passionate about addressing the decline of the salmon stocks and finding long-term solutions that will ensure that both subsistence and commercial fishing can continue. He addressed Representative Saddler's concern about Ms. Irwin's age, saying that too often young Alaskans do not get involved in advisory committees and boards, but she is an exception, and there need to be more people like her. In closing, he testified against Mr. Carpenter's appointment to the Board of Fish, citing his bias toward commercial fishing and lack of recognition regarding their role in salmon decline.

[2:16:56 PM](#)

ROD ARNO, Policy Director, Alaska Outdoor Council, spoke in opposition to the appointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries. He explained that the Alaska Outdoor Council submitted a proposal to the Board of Fisheries to reduce the negative impact of the trawler fleet in Prince William Sound. Instead of a reduction, the board opened up more of Prince William Sound to the trawler fleet. In addition, Mr. Carpenter had failed to say that he has been on the Prince William Sound aquaculture corporation board since 2002 and that he had also not acknowledged the correlation of fish hatchery chum to the decline of wild salmon.

[2:19:14 PM](#)

CRAIG THYTHLOOK, Fisheries Policy Director, Native Peoples Action, spoke in support of the appointment Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries. He explained that she demonstrated dedication to her community and showed leadership commitment and ability to work with commercial fisherman, subsistence and personal use groups, and other stakeholder groups.

[2:21:33 PM](#)

VIRGIL UMPHENOUR, representing self, spoke in support of the appointment of Rick Green to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission, the reappointment of Al Barrette to the Board of Game, and the appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries. He spoke in opposition to the reappointment of Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries, stating that Mr. Carpenter

ignored peer-reviewed science, specifically the impact of hatchery fish on the condition of fish stocks.

[2:24:25 PM](#)

RHONDA PITKA, Chief, Village of Beaver, spoke in support of the appointment Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries citing her diligence, preparation, and understanding of the nuances of regulation.

[2:25:29 PM](#)

JARED DANIELSON, representing self, spoke in support of the reappointment Tom Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries, explaining that he had brought a calm, steady voice to the table and focused on what matters most, the health of the resource and the future of people who depend on it. He stated that Mr. Carpenter was thoughtful, approachable, and open to hearing all different views and that he also made fair and informed decisions based on the best available information.

[2:27:03 PM](#)

JOEL JACKSON, President, Organized Village of Kake, spoke in support of the appointment of Olivia Irwin to the Board of Fisheries. He explained that even though she is a younger person, she has been very vested in issues relating to Alaska fisheries. He pointed out that the king, chum, pinks, sockeye, and coho which migrate from the Bering Sea are all getting smaller. It underlines the importance of having board members who are open-minded to all stakeholders.

[2:29:03 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE, after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on the governor's appointees to the Board of Game, the Board of Fisheries, and the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission.

[2:29:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR DIBERT announced that the House Resources Standing committee held hearings on the following appointees: Olivia Henaayee Irwin and Thomas Carpenter to the Board of Fisheries; Rick Green to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission; and Alan Barrette and Carri Ann Mueller to the Board of Game. A signature on this report does not reflect an intent by any of

the members to vote for or against the confirmation of the individuals during any further session.

CO-CHAIR BURKE stated that there being no objection, the names of the nominees would be forwarded to a joint session of the House and Senate.

[2:29:55 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:29 p.m. to 2:32 p.m.

**HB 125-BOARD OF FISHERIES MEMBERSHIP**

[2:32:27 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 125, "An Act relating to membership of the Board of Fisheries."

[2:32:32 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE opened public testimony on HB 125.

[2:32:58 PM](#)

CHUCK DERRICK, President, Chitina Dipnetters Association, testified regarding HB 125, explaining that he opposed the bill unless it was amended to include personal use fishery as part of the Board of Fisheries. He supported amendments 3 and 4 which would change the make-up of the board by giving personal use fishery a voice on the board.

[2:34:37 PM](#)

KAREN LINNELL, Executive Director, Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, spoke in support of HB 125 as written. She explained that in-river fisheries and subsistence fisheries have been under-represented on the Board of Fish for many years. This bill would create balance.

[2:37:05 PM](#)

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director, Resident Hunters of Alaska, explained that the Board of Game has similar issues to the Board of Fisheries and legislators should consider addressing the Board of Game as well. His organization did not believe designated seats would solve the problems because those seats

would become just as politicized. He posited that individuals in those seats could still vote in ways that do not adhere to the state constitution and what is best for fish and game resources and the residents who depend on those resources to feed their families. The reforms needed on both boards would ensure strict adherence to article 8 of the Alaska constitution which holds the state's fish and wildlife as a public trust for the common use of Alaskans. The priority should always be doing what is best for the resources. He encouraged first restricting the commercial sector, explaining that fish and game have been managed according to who brings in the most money. He acknowledged the importance of commercial hunting and fishing, but that should not override what is best for fish and game populations and resident Alaskans who depend on those resources.

[2:39:16 PM](#)

ROD ARNO, Policy Director, Alaska Outdoor Council, as Policy Director for the Alaska Outdoor Council, spoke in support of HB 125, explaining that the council had been advocating for a restructure of the Board of Fisheries since 1983. He stated that dedicated seats might be a good direction to go. He supported adopting Amendment 4 which provided for a personal use fishery, explaining that personal use is not sport and not subsistence. He discussed the Madison Decision and the McDowell Decision, and the definitions of subsistence use and personal use in statute.

[2:41:33 PM](#)

CRAIG THYTHLOOK, Fisheries Policy Director, Native Peoples Action, explained that he represented Native Peoples Action, and they supported HB 125, emphasizing that tribal representation and subsistence seats should be a priority. He described the importance of traditional ways of life and indigenous knowledge. He also expressed concern regarding language referring to tribal appointments and opportunities. Regarding the proposed scientific seat, he pointed out that the definition of science could be subjective.

[2:44:18 PM](#)

NANCY HILLSTRAND, Owner, Pioneer Alaskan Fisheries, spoke about sustaining fisheries and her concerns regarding losing fish. She emphasized the importance of having a person who was knowledgeable about how to sustain fish populations and avoid the decline of stocks. She proposed that the term "fishery

manager" on p. 2, line 6, should be strengthened to become an ecosystem manager and that there needed to be "more science."

[2:46:47 PM](#)

JAMES SIMON, representing self, spoke in support of HB 125. He explained that the bill emphasized fair representation of all Alaskans and would provide necessary representation of customary and traditional fisheries in Board of Fisheries decision making. As a former ADF&G Regional subsistence supervisor who attended many board meetings, he observed many commercial and sports fishery members claim subsistence user status, diminishing the impact of in-river subsistence users whose only interests are conservation and the continuation of age-old ways of life. He pointed out that many subsistence fishers lost their commercial fishing decades ago due to poor salmon returns and market shifts. He posited that HB 125 should not be amended to replace subsistence-designated seats with personal use seats because personal use fisheries are already adequately represented. He pointed out that the Chitina Dipnetters Association personal use fishery has consistently exceeded allocation targets in seven of the past ten years. He discussed past salmon harvest numbers compared to recent years.

[2:49:51 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE, after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 125.

[2:50:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR BURKE announced HB 125 would be held over.

[2:50:43 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Resources Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:50 p.m.