

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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November 2, 2015

Governor Bill Walker
State Capitol
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker,

We have heard from many of our constituents in the Mat-Su who have expressed concern and dismay regarding your recent letter to the Board of Fisheries members. They raised questions as to whether it is appropriate for you to instruct the Board of Fisheries (Board) where to hold their meetings. They consider the Board as the "peoples' board", not a political extension of the Governor's office. It appears to them that you continue to receive bad advice and provide preferential treatment for one user group, commercial fisheries, to the potential detriment of tens of thousands of Alaskans that participate in the recreational and personal use fisheries.

We are certain you would agree that the legislature holds the public trust responsibility for the utilization, development, and conservation of our fishery resources. That public trust doctrine is clearly articulated in Article 8, Section 2 of our State Constitution. The fisheries belong to the people of Alaska, and as their representatives, the legislature has statutorily delegated our constitutional responsibility to conserve and allocate those resources to the Board. In performing this difficult task, the Board should have the latitude to set their schedule and agenda, and certainly the latitude to select where they hold their meetings. This should happen without interference from the executive, or any other external special interests.

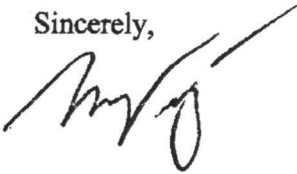
While we recognize it is your constitutional role to appoint members to the Board, it is the legislature that confirms Board members and delegates our authority and direction so they can perform their important, and often thankless, duty.

We note that your rather forceful letter pushing the Board toward a meeting site for the 2017 Upper Cook Inlet cycle came on the heels of your recent visit to Soldotna. While we recognize the rights of all user groups to have their representative organizations, we find it inappropriate that any of those groups receive preferential treatment from the State's chief executive.

You will note that we are not writing the Board requesting they move their meeting to the Mat-Su Valley, but merely to keep the meeting in Anchorage – a neutral site the Board has already selected – even though the majority of fishery stocks of concern statewide are found in that area. We make this choice, not because our constituents are less important or more entitled, rather because we believe decisions of meeting locations are within the Board's authority, and we want the opportunity for the broadest possible public participation in the public process. Governor, we call on you to reconsider what many see as politically motivated pressure on the Board, and allow them to set and conduct their meeting without interference.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senate Seat E



Senator Bill Stoltze
Senate Seat F