

REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE STUTES

Alaska State Legislature / District 32

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Date: January 12, 2020

To: Chairman Morisky, Alaska Board of Fisheries

Re: Concerns Regarding Board Process at Kodiak Meeting

Dear Chairman Morisky and Members of the Board,

I write today with grave concerns about the Board process at the Kodiak Finfish meeting thus far. In the interest of candor, I'll be blunt.

Since the start of deliberations on Saturday, there has been a strong public perception that the Board arrived in Kodiak with a predetermined course of action on some very impactful proposals and issues. Further, the perception is that these proposals simply prioritize one area over another while doing nothing to identify and address the underlying issues.

Having been present for both Saturday and Sundays' Board proceedings and having sat through every Fisheries Committee presentation for the past 6-years, I am forced to agree with both perspectives.

One of the main strengths of the Alaska Board of Fisheries process is the ability of local stakeholders to interact directly with board members, the department, and each other in a transparent and public process whereby the merits of each proposal can be debated. Fundamental to this process, is the idea that the public is properly noticed of changes and able to participate in the debate before the Board has made up its mind; I fear that is not occurring in this instance.

It is rare that I write you with anything other than a request to take a second look at something with a fresh set of eyes and this is no different.

As the State Representative for Kodiak, the Chair of the Special Committee on Fisheries, and an Alaskan who cares deeply about our fishermen and the resource, I implore you to pause, take that second look, and reengage with local stakeholders and the department.

Thank you again for travelling to our community. As you know, front-end local engagement is a key component of the public process and reaching sound management decisions. While you are here, I strongly encourage you to take every opportunity to listen to and carefully consider all perspectives in your deliberations.

Sincerely,



Representative Louise Stutes
Chair, House Special Committee on Fisheries
State House Representative for District 32
Proudly Serving Kodiak, Cordova, Yakutat, and Seldovia

