

Alaska State Legislature



Speaker Louise Stutes
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Ronald Gillham
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Andi Story
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative George Rauscher
Representative Kevin McCabe

Date: March 5, 2021

To: Märit Carlson-Van Dort
Chair, Alaska Board of Fisheries

Re: Public Process Concerns

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Members of the Board of Fisheries,

We write today with grave public process concerns over the board's decision to postpone the 2020/2021 meeting cycle until 2021/2022 without shifting the 2021/2022 meetings to 2022/2023.

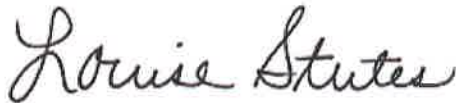
"Doubling up" on meetings runs counter to departmental recommendations, expectations from the joint board meeting, as well as public comments solicited by ADF&G's Board Support Section; moreover, the decision discourages public participation and input on two levels.

First, condensing two cycles into one undercuts the work of Advisory Committees (AC), the very foundation of the Board of Fisheries' public process. ACs, which operate on a volunteer basis and were rightfully expecting a different decision, must now scramble to generate proposals during a pandemic. Further, AC's increased workload as a result of the decision will lead to less local input and vetting of proposals; this is due to some ACs meeting more often in a given cycle, as well as the inability to stagger AC's Board of Fisheries and Board of Game meetings.

Second, the decision will lessen public participation at full board meetings. During a normal cycle, travel to and participation in board proceedings is a challenge for the average Alaskan, most of whom are working professionals. This accelerated schedule will only make it more difficult for Alaskans to participate.

For the sake of the public process, we respectfully urge you to reconsider your decision at the March 8th board meeting.

Sincerely,



Speaker Louise Stutes



Representative Bryce Edgmon



Representative Ben Carpenter



Representative Ronald Gillham



Representative Sarah Vance



Representative Dan Ortiz



Representative Andi Story



Representative Sara Hannan



Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins



Representative George Rauscher



Representative Kevin McCabe

Cc: Glenn Haight, Executive Director,
Alaska Board of Fisheries Board Support Section