

From: [Lance](#)
To: [DFG, BOF Comments \(DFG sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Change of venue
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January 21, 2022

An Open Letter to the Alaska Board of Fisheries

We the following listed fishermen and fishing related organizations represent a significant fraction of the fishing related entities in Southeast Alaska. We are writing to strongly implore you to delay the Southeast Alaska Board meeting until it can again be held safely in Southeast Alaska, say between November 2022 and February 2023. We understand the Board's desire to not get too far behind on its schedule. However, we don't feel scheduling a meeting during a pandemic is wise, and we don't feel scheduling a large Southeast meeting in Anchorage is a wise course either. Very few members of the public and/or stakeholders will be able or willing to attend the Anchorage meeting. Making major changes to the King Salmon Management Plan, or complex herring regulations, or commercial bycatch rules without adequate public input is just not reasonable or desirable.

We understand the convenience to the Board to hold several back-to-back meetings in March in Anchorage in an effort to "catch up." However, it has been our experience that the reason the Board of Fisheries process works is because the process has always belonged to the fishing public, and not for the convenience of the members of the Board.

We understand the cost and the logistical nightmare that having a Southeast meeting here in Southeast in March before or after the regularly scheduled March meeting would entail. That, we believe, is too high a cost, both logistically for the Board and financially to Southeast fishermen who are already commercial fishing in March. Additionally, the pandemic in Alaska is not expected to disappear in March. While the January 13th press release cited Anchorage's superior "hospital resources in the event of a large outbreak" in support of the Anchorage location, a more appropriate choice of action would be to not hold in person meetings at all when the likelihood of a major outbreak is significant enough to play a role in determining where the meeting is held. Each of us has likely been a winner or a loser at Board of Fisheries decisions over the years. Win or lose, we support a Board of Fisheries process that is fair to all users and provides as many people as possible the opportunity to interact with Board members and staff in person within the region.

Moving the Southeast meeting to Anchorage is a slap in the face to Southeast fishermen. It is not likely a Board would move the Cook Inlet meeting to Fairbanks or Juneau. Why treat Southeast differently? Additionally, the board has delegated adequate authorities to the Commissioner to protect the users and the resource until a more reasonable meeting date can be set for Southeast.

Thank you,
Lance Preston