
ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES

Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
Webconference | September 25, 2026

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WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT**Alaska Board of Fisheries****Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs**

September 25, 2026 Webconference Meeting

Submitted by:

Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance (ACFCA)

Russell Clark, Founder/Organizer

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September 22, 2026

I. INTRODUCTION

The Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance (ACFCA) is a newly forming nonprofit organization representing commercial fishermen in Alaska. Our focus is conservation, resource sustainability, and protection of traditional commercial fishing access rights. ACFCA is open to commercial fishermen of all gear types. Current membership includes set net and drift permit holders in Upper Cook Inlet whose livelihoods depend on sound fisheries management and a fair Board of Fisheries process. ACFCA intends to participate in future BOF proceedings on behalf of Cook Inlet drift fleet permit holders and to address management determinations affecting fisheries in both State waters and the federal Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) as they bear on the sustainability and allocation of Cook Inlet salmon stocks.

ACFCA submits this written comment to the Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs to address three areas: (1) conservation priorities for Upper Cook Inlet fisheries, including spawning bed protection and the statutory requirement that non-allocative determinations follow the sustained yield mandate before any allocation question is reached; (2) research and data needs for Upper Cook Inlet allocation decisions in the 2027 BOF cycle; and (3) recommendations for strengthening Board process and record-keeping.

II. CONSERVATION PRIORITIES: SPAWNING BED PROTECTION AND NON-ALLOCATIVE DETERMINATIONS

ACFCA asks the Committee to recommend that the Board give priority attention to spawning habitat conservation in Upper Cook Inlet salmon fisheries and to the distinction between conservation-based and allocative management determinations as it prepares for the 2027 cycle.

A. Spawning Bed Protection: Statutory Basis and Management Obligations

The Alaska Constitution requires that Alaska's natural resources be managed on the sustained yield principle. Alaska Const. art. VIII, §4. The Board of Fisheries is authorized under AS 16.05.251 to adopt regulations governing methods of taking fish and to establish closed seasons and areas to protect fish during spawning. Conservation comes first under that mandate;

allocation among user groups is a secondary consideration that does not override the sustained yield obligation.

Upper Cook Inlet supports critical spawning habitat for Chinook, sockeye, coho, and pink salmon in the Kenai, Russian, Kasilof, and Susitna River systems and their tributaries. The health of those spawning beds is the biological foundation on which all commercial, sport, and subsistence harvest depends. Spawning bed protection is an in-river, habitat-based obligation that falls within the Board's authority under AS 16.05.251 and is independent of open-water allocation questions. ACFCA asks the Committee to recommend that the Board treat in-river spawning habitat protection as a standing conservation priority, coordinated with ADF&G Habitat Division and the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and that escapement goal attainment across all major UCI tributaries be presented to the Board before any allocation proposal in the 2027 cycle is considered on the merits.

B. Non-Allocative Determinations: Statutory Requirements

Alaska law distinguishes between allocative and non-allocative fisheries management determinations. A determination is non-allocative when it is grounded in conservation necessity: protecting spawning stocks, achieving escapement goals, preventing habitat damage, rather than redistributing harvest opportunity among competing user groups. Non-allocative conservation measures receive greater legal deference and are less susceptible to equal access or takings challenges than purely allocative decisions.

ACFCA asks the Committee to recommend that the Board apply the following principles in its determinations for the 2027 cycle:

- **Lead with conservation findings:** Where a proposed regulation, including any gear restriction, area closure, or season modification, is supportable on conservation grounds, the Board should structure its findings to reflect the conservation basis first, separate from any allocation effect. A conservation-justified regulation is on stronger statutory and legal footing than one framed primarily as an allocation between user groups.
- **Follow the sustained yield mandate:** AS 16.05.251 and the Alaska Constitution require that Board regulations serve the sustained yield principle. Any gear expansion or allocation increase that cannot be shown to leave adequate spawning escapement across all major UCI stocks must be rejected on conservation grounds regardless of the economic or political interests advanced in its support.
- **Require biological findings before allocative change:** The Board should not adopt any proposal in the 2027 cycle that reallocates harvest opportunity in Upper Cook Inlet without first requiring ADF&G to certify that the proposed change is consistent with achieving and maintaining established escapement goals for all affected stocks across the full range of run-size scenarios. That certification is a statutory prerequisite, not a procedural formality.
- **Document the conservation record:** The Board's written findings for each UCI determination in the 2027 cycle should address separately: (a) the conservation basis for the regulation, including escapement goal consistency, and (b) any secondary allocative effects. Keeping those findings separate puts conservation determinations clearly on the record and defensible under AS 16.05.251 and Alaska Const. art. VIII.

ACFCA does not argue that allocation is irrelevant to UCI management. Our position is that conservation must come first and that the Board's findings must reflect that sequence, as the statute requires.

III. UPPER COOK INLET: RESEARCH AND DATA NEEDS

Upper Cook Inlet supports significant commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries. Allocation of harvest between gear types in this drainage is among the most consequential management questions facing the Board in the 2027 cycle. ACFCA asks the Committee to identify the following as priority research and data needs for that cycle:

- Current stock assessment data for Eastside set net fishery areas, including updated run timing, escapement goal analysis, and gear-type-specific harvest impact data sufficient to support an evidence-based allocation determinations for Upper Cook Inlet proposals in the 2027 cycle.
- Economic impact analysis of allocation changes on existing permit holders, including set net permit holders in the Eastside fishery. The Board's allocation decisions directly affect the economic value of limited entry permits issued by CFEC. Adequate economic data should be available to the Board before any reallocation affecting permit values is considered.
- Historical harvest data by gear type covering at least twenty years for Upper Cook Inlet drift and set net fisheries, sufficient to identify trends in harvest efficiency, effort, and escapement outcomes.
- Independent biological review of any gear-type conversion or expansion proposed in the 2027 cycle, including cumulative impact analysis on escapement targets and long-term stock sustainability.

ACFCA asks the Committee to include these data needs in its recommendations to the full Board and to task ADF&G with presenting updated stock assessment and harvest impact data at the 2027 Upper Cook Inlet BOF meeting.

IV. BOARD PROCESS: ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

ACFCA also recommends the following on Board process:

- Meeting notice: The Board should establish minimum notice standards, including public notice to registered stakeholders, for any committee meeting at which public comment is accepted or organizational positions are considered.
- Member participation: The Board should encourage stakeholder organizations to demonstrate that the positions they advocate before the Board reflect actual member participation. Positions adopted by leadership alone should be identified as such in the record.
- Record-keeping: All written public comments submitted in each BOF cycle should be preserved in a publicly accessible administrative record. The Board's stated basis for each allocation and management decision should identify the record evidence it relied on.
- Pre-adoption legal and implementation review: The 2025-26 BOF cycle demonstrated the cost of adopting regulations without confirming in advance that they are legally

groundable and administratively implementable. Regulatory Change 161 (Proposal 186), which would have modified Upper Cook Inlet drift gillnet coho regulations, was adopted by the Board but could not be filed by the Lieutenant Governor after Department of Law review identified that the ACR process had been used for a permanent allocation change and that the regulation lacked biological performance standards required to support a conservation-based determination under AS 16.05.251. The 2026 UCI fishery was managed on emergency orders as a result. ACFCA recommends that the Board require ADF&G and the Department of Law to complete a pre-adoption review of any proposed regulation in the 2027 cycle confirming: (a) the legal basis for the proposed action, (b) the process authority under which it is being advanced, and (c) the commissioner's ability to implement the regulation as adopted, before the Board takes a final vote.

V. CONCLUSION

The recommendations in this comment are aimed at a BOF process that is transparent, grounded in conservation law, and based on sound data. Allocation decisions affecting Alaska's commercial fishermen should follow from adequate biological findings, not precede them.

ACFCA looks forward to participating in the 2027 BOF cycle. We are available to provide additional information upon request.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance,

Russell Clark

Founder/Organizer, Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance (ACFCA)

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September 22, 2026

Disclosure: This written public comment is submitted on behalf of the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance (ACFCA) in ACFCA's independent organizational capacity. It is not submitted in connection with, and should not be construed as part of or associated with, Clark v. State of Alaska, Case No. 3KN-26-00515CI, currently pending in the Superior Court for the State of Alaska, Third Judicial District at Kenai.

Alaska Outdoor Council commits on BOF Policy 2024-305-FB

The Alaska Outdoor Council and its member Clubs have been at the forefront of the effort to retain state management and use of fish and game consistent with the Alaska Statehood Act adopted by the U.S. Congress and signed into law in 1958.

Article 8, Section 1 through 4 of the Alaska State Constitution put it in writing, common use of fish and game resources was the law, before Title VIII of Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) was adopted by the U.S. Congress and signed into law in 1980 providing for a priority to fish and game did exist on federal public lands/ways based on your address.

Since the late 70's the Alaska Boards of Game and Fisheries (BOF) have continued to acquiesce to the federal land managers intent of extending its management and allocative authority on federal lands to state and private lands with the hopes the state would adopt subsistence regulations that would implement laws of general applicability to Title VIII of ANILCA and end dual state/federal fish and game management and allocation. Is 2024-305-FB yet another attempt by the BOF at having the state implement Federal law in order to eliminate dual federal/state management?

Splitting two user groups into traditional knowledge (TK) or local knowledge (LK) Is what BOF policy 2024-305-FB does and would further undermine the ADF&G Advisory Committee process, AS 16.05.260, which has already suffered the erosion of the creation of a Federal Subsistence Board. The clear intent written into 5 AAC Chapter 96. Article 1 back in 1983 was to bring Alaskan local users of fish and game together to hash out needed regulatory changes for conservation and use of fish and game in their locality, 2024-305-FB would achieve the opposite. The Alaska Outdoor Council feels strongly that face to face compromises between TK and LK occurs best at the local level at the ADF&G advisory committee process in state law since 1983, AS 16.05.260.

Whether or not implementing the Alaska Board of Fisheries Traditional Knowledge policy would make the federal land managers more inclined to accept that the state is in compliance ANILCA Sec. 805(d) and return subsistence use of fish and game back over to the state seems unlikely and not worth the damage caused by further dividing Alaskan who hunt and fish for a wildfood source.

The estimated consumption of time and resources to the Department and public attending longer meetings needs consideration as does who is paying the Department's costs, General state funds or Fish and game fund, AS 16.05.100.



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Alaska Board of Fisheries
 Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs

Re: Public comment for the September 25, 2026, committee meeting

Dear Committee Members:

The Alaska Salmon Alliance is a nonprofit organization comprised of commercial seafood processors, allied businesses, and fishermen. We focus on public education and promoting the value of scientifically based salmon management to preserve habitats and create predictable harvests for all salmon users. Our goal is to create long-term economic opportunities and benefits for Alaska's coastal communities for future generations.

We appreciate the committee's review of Board process and opportunities for public input. Although, we would welcome greater clarity about what changes the committee is considering and what problems those changes are trying to solve. Recent Cook Inlet proceedings have underscored the need for a predictable, accessible process.

Although not listed in your agenda, it would be helpful in the process if proposal books were available at least one month before the Board's work session. Fishermen, processors, advisory committees, and other members of the public need time to read proposals, gather information, meet, and prepare useful comments. When a proposal book is released late, advisory committees lose part of the time they need to vet proposals before the Board takes them up. We ask the committee to recommend a publication target that provides at least a month of review and to report promptly to the public if that target cannot be met.

Stock of concern decisions. The agenda asks whether the Board should accept agenda change requests (ACRs) for out of cycle stock of concern determinations. ASA's answer is no, absent a genuinely urgent conservation circumstance supported by a department assessment. A request to designate a stock of concern should not, by itself, substitute for ADF&G's stock status analysis and the regular opportunity for public review of the science and proposed action plan. The Board should receive the Department's assessment, identify the biological basis for any concern, and allow affected fisheries and advisory committees a meaningful opportunity to respond before it acts.

The distinction between biological and optimal escapement goals also needs attention. An OEG can reflect allocative as well as biological considerations. ADF&G's April 2026 Upper Cook Inlet escapement goal memorandum describes its review of BEGs and SEGs; it lists OEGs separately without recommending changes to them. We ask the committee to recommend a review of the stock of concern policy so that failure to meet a Board-adopted OEG does not, on its own, establish a biological stock problem. Any stock of concern determination should explain the evidence of a sustained yield or management problem independently of the allocative component of an OEG.

ACRs and emergency petitions. These processes serve special circumstances and should remain exceptions to the regular proposal cycle. Under 5 AAC 39.999, an ACR is limited to a conservation purpose, correction of a regulatory

error, or correction of an effect unforeseen when a regulation was adopted. Predominantly allocative requests require compelling new information. The Board should make a clear, recorded finding identifying which criterion each accepted ACR meets and the facts supporting that finding. It should also keep the resulting proposal within the subject and scope presented to the public in the ACR. If the proposed change becomes materially different, the Board should provide fresh notice and adequate time for public comment before taking final action.

The Joint Board Petition Policy recognizes public reliance on the regular process and says emergencies are rarely found to exist. Cook Inlet has seen five Board related meetings between normally scheduled meetings. That imposes costs on participants and makes it difficult for advisory committees and the public to keep up. The committee should examine whether out-of-cycle processes are being used too often for issues that could receive fuller consideration in the regular cycle.

Board-generated proposals. The Board's criteria for developing its own proposals ask whether the matter is urgent, whether existing processes are insufficient, and whether the public will have an adequate opportunity to comment. The Board should apply those criteria on the record before advancing a proposal. When an issue can wait, a Board-generated proposal should enter the regular call for proposals, with the same time for advisory committee review and public input as other proposals.

We are particularly concerned when an out-of-cycle proposal is defeated, then substantially similar language returns out of cycle the following year. In March 2025, the Board rejected Proposal 313 as amended by RC072, which would have replaced the stock of concern plan's set gillnet openings with beach seine opportunity. In May 2026, following a change in Board membership, the Board adopted substantially similar language through Board-generated Proposal 192 at a special meeting. That action eliminated set gillnet opportunity under the stock of concern plan. Absent new facts or an urgent conservation need, a defeated proposal should return through the regular proposal cycle, allowing advisory committees and the public adequate time to review it.

Public input during meetings. Committee of the Whole gives participants an opportunity to answer questions and work through the practical effects of proposed regulations with Board members. Record copies allow the public to respond to new information, committee reports, and revised proposal language as a meeting develops. Both are valuable uses of Board time because they help members understand the consequences of a decision before deliberation. If the committee recommends changes to either opportunity, please preserve a practical way for affected people to respond when significant new language or information appears during a meeting.

A sound process gives the Board better information and gives the public a fair chance to participate. We ask the committee to recommend clear standards for timely proposal books, narrow use of out-of-cycle procedures, documented findings when those procedures are used, and meaningful public review of the language the Board ultimately considers.

Sincerely,



Norm Darch
Executive Director

cc: Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson, Chair, Legislative Budget and Audit Committee

Date: September 23, 2026

To:

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs

via Online Submission Portal

**Subject: Written Public Comment for the September 25, 2026, Committee Meeting
– Suggested Changes for Board Process, Management, and Research**

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Members of the Committee,

This written comment is submitted on behalf of Alaska's Best Seafoods (ABS), a shore-based processing facility operating at Ekuk Beach (Statistical Area 325-34) on the Nushagak River. ABS is the sole commercial market for approximately 100 Ekuk Beach setnet permit holders, most of whom are watershed or Alaska residents who rely on shore-based setnet sites where nets are hauled in using specially-equipped trucks.

This Committee is meeting at a critical juncture for public confidence in the regulatory process, coming directly on the heels of the July 2026 Legislative Audit ordered by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee due to systemic concerns regarding poor public process and lack of transparent balancing frameworks. We urge this Committee to utilize this meeting to recommend explicit, structural updates to the Board's decision-making process.

Our comments touch on specific issues, but moreover we would like to see a discussion started to answer a fundamental question: **What process changes will the Board and ADF&G implement to ensure it does not regulate commercial operators into bankruptcy in situations where the biological gains are minimal?**

If not for a late upward surge in sockeye salmon prices, the 2026 season would have been economically disastrous for most commercial fishermen operating in the Nushagak District. This disaster would not have been caused by a lack of sockeye, but rather because so many sockeye overescaped due to blunt commercial fishing restrictions aimed at conserving Chinook salmon. This management strategy resulted in the river's sockeye run overescaping its Sustainable Escapement Goal (SEG) by 2.4 million sockeye. At an average of 5 lbs. per sockeye and a conservative base ex-vessel price of \$1.72/lb., **this represents a foregone sockeye harvest worth \$20.6 million in ex-vessel terms alone.**

ABS implemented a meticulous Chinook counting program this season. Chinook salmon were physically separated from the production line, counted, and weighed for each individual lot (differentiated by fish origin, tide, and day) while being monitored via facility cameras. We are providing this data publicly (see attached table) to confirm our long-standing position that relatively few kings are caught on Ekuk Beach due to its unique location and shallow-water structure.

The data compiled during the 2026 season completely validates this fact:

- Over the entire season, ABS purchased 4.29 million pounds of sockeye and chum salmon from Ekuk Beach fishermen, compared to a total of just 360 Chinook salmon (including personal use retention).
- The average weight of these Chinook salmon was a mere 6.3 lbs., confirming that the harvest consists almost entirely of small "jacks" rather than mature spawners.
- This Chinook harvest constitutes a mathematically negligible 0.053% of total salmon pounds bought (approximately 53 king lbs. per 100,000 lbs. of sockeye, including an estimate of Chinook retained for personal use).

Furthermore, the Department's current process of delaying the sockeye opening window did virtually nothing to conserve Chinook salmon, at least on Ekuk Beach. In 2026, during the first four days of fishing (June 27–June 30), the plant brought in 1.58 million round pounds of sockeye/chum, versus a mere 69 Chinook averaging 6.1 lbs (round weight). Of those 69 Chinook, only one fish (not retained for personal use) was over 10 pounds, and internal production logs confirm that only 12 Chinook in the entire season weighed over 10 lbs. (H&G weight).

The lowest king-to-sockeye encounter ratios of the entire season occurred during the exact early window that management delayed. This delay did not save breeder-sized spawning kings; it simply forced massive sockeye overescapement, forewent vital commercial revenue, and piled immense economic risk onto a world-class commercial fishery for practically zero biological gain to the Chinook run health.

The data presented highlights a fundamental structural failing in the Board's process. The Board of Fisheries has been expanding commercial sockeye fishing restrictions in the Nushagak River for several years now without any serious cost/benefit analysis. In doing so, resident-owned businesses and the local economy is experiencing heavy economic damages with no material biological benefit. This framework directly violates

the Policy for the Management of Mixed Stock Salmon Fisheries (5 AAC 39.220(b)), which explicitly mandates that "the burden of conservation shall be shared among all fisheries in close proportion to their respective harvest on the stock of concern".

To prevent Alaska fisheries from becoming economically unsustainable and implement regulations which follow the State Constitution, we recommend the following changes to Board process, management, and research:

- 1. Implement Pre-Regulation Cost/Benefit Analyses:** Create a structured process where the risks to localized economic sustainability receive co-equal consideration alongside biological modeling before emergency restrictions are implemented.
- 2. Authorize Statistical Area (Beach-Level) Emergency Authority:** Provide area managers with explicit regulatory flexibility to isolate and open low-impact statistical areas from section-wide closures. If a specific area is catching kings during the early season, close it down; if it is not, allow it to harvest abundant sockeye. This localized precision should be expanded to let managers adjust fishing time to account for migration factors like wind, tidal flow, and weather.
- 3. Improve Salmon Enumeration Research Data:** The Nushagak sonar array was never designed to accurately enumerate Chinook salmon and contains major, well-known technical flaws in this regard. The Board should prioritize targeting grant programs, such as NOAA's Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, to modernize enumeration infrastructure.
- 4. Restore In-Season Sport Charter Logbooks:** Re-implement mandatory in-season logbooks for sport fishing charters to make real-time data available to management. In lieu of adequate sonar enumeration for Chinook, a fleet of professional charter guides is the single best data proxy for in-river Chinook abundance trends.
- 5. Acknowledge External, Non-Regulatory Biological Factors:** Establish a formal process for considering the overriding impacts of external ecological factors. Extensive peer-reviewed research proves that Chinook salmon abundance and size are being heavily degraded by marine predation, climate shifts, and high-volume Asian salmon hatchery releases. These factors are entirely outside of state regulatory control. Continually shutting down clean, localized shore-based

commercial harvesters to counteract unmeasured ocean-wide factors is a futile exercise that inflicts immense, irreversible harm on Alaska fishery stakeholders.

True resource conservation under Article VIII of the Alaska Constitution requires safeguarding both the biological health of our salmon runs and the vital human and economic infrastructure needed to utilize them. We urge this Committee to recommend process updates that treat biological conservation and socioeconomic viability as co-equal pillars of the Sustained Yield principle, ensuring that the sustainable management of our resources remains viable for the communities and families that depend on them.

Finally, we would like to give credit to the Board and ADF&G where its due. Heading into the 2026 season, the Nushagak District had fallen short of the setnet harvest allocation goal in 8 of the previous 9 seasons. The Board and ADF&G committed to getting back to the regulated allocation in 2026, and (largely) due to setnetters being afforded some fishing time before driftnet fishermen went in on each tide, that target allocation was achieved in 2026.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jerry Ball, Owner & General Manager
Alaska's Best Seafoods
202 Cannery Drive
Eguk, AK 99576

Attachments:

2026 Alaska's Best Seafoods Chinook Harvest & Purchases Data Table

2026 Alaska's Best Seafoods Chinook log

ALASKA'S BEST SEAFOODS - CHINOOK HARVEST & PURCHASES

STAT AREA - 325-34 (EKUK BEACH)

CATCH DATE	FISH TICKETS		THRU PLANT		PERSONAL	TOTAL KINGS		REDS/CHUMS			NOTES
	COUNT	LBS	COUNT	LBS*	USE	COUNT**	AVG. LBS***	LBS	LBS/KING	VALUE/KING****	
6/27/2026	1	4	8	46.6	1	9	4.0	282,061	31,340	\$150,824	ONE TIDE FISHED.
6/28/2026	10	51	5	21.1	14	19	5.1	629,363	33,124	159,411	
6/29/2026	18	120	9	37.5	9	18	6.7	396,864	22,048	106,106	ONE TIDE FISHED.
6/30/2026	4	26	15	73.7	8	23	6.5	270,736	11,771	56,649	
7/1/2026	10	83	10	43.4	11	21	8.3	462,669	22,032	106,028	
7/2/2026	6	43.1	17	83.1	14	31	7.2	186,613	6,020	28,970	
7/3/2026	14	84	21	96.6	7	28	6.0	252,469	9,017	43,393	
7/4/2026	7	59	18	78.1	2	20	8.4	254,895	12,745	61,334	
7/5/2026	7	47	14	80.9	6	20	6.7	307,664	15,383	74,032	
7/6/2026	16	77	11	42.9	15	26	4.8	161,886	6,226	29,964	
7/7/2026	9	68	24	109.3	5	29	7.6	188,523	6,501	31,285	
7/8/2026	14	92.8	13	48.5	13	26	6.6	152,963	5,883	28,313	
7/9/2026	15	71	16	69.4	10	26	4.7	67,740	2,605	12,538	
7/10/2026	9	39.5	18	79.5	4	22	4.4	123,510	5,614	27,018	
7/11/2026	8	53	3	19.1	0	3	6.6	143,386	47,795	230,015	
7/12/2026	5	35	11	45.1	0	11	7.0	117,151	10,650	51,254	
7/13/2026	11	112	4	50.8	0	4	10.2	79,233	19,808	95,327	
7/14/2026	12	62	7	21.2	0	7	5.2	63,806	9,115	43,867	
7/15/2026	3	19	2	5.3	0	2	6.3	22,890	11,445	55,079	
7/16/2026	4	33	4	31.1	0	4	8.3	24,429	6,107	29,391	
7/17/2026	7	28	9	27.4	0	9	4.0	35,479	3,942	18,971	
7/18/2026	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	-	22,734	-	-	
7/19/2026	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	-	22,701	-	-	
7/20/2026	2	8	N/A	N/A	0	2	4.0	10,819	5,410	26,033	
7/21/2026	0	0	N/A	N/A	0	0	-	9,407	-	-	
TOTALS	192	1,215	239	1,110	119	360	6.3	4,289,991	11,917	\$57,349	

Table Notes

KING vs. SOCKEYE/CHUM harvest thru JULY 21: 0.053% (includes estimated weight of personal-use kings)

* H&G Weight.

(53 King lbs. per 100,000 sockeye/chum lbs.)

** Kings thru Plant + Personal Use kings.

*** Average weight from fish ticket kings (personal use does not report weight).

Number of Kings above 10 lbs.*: 12 fish

**** \$6.25 * 77% recovery rate * LBS of Reds/Chums per King salmon (first wholesale basis).

2026 ABS Chinook Salmon - Production Line Weights (H&G basis)

STAT AREA - 325-34 (EKUK BEACH)

Total Number of Kings Over 10 lbs.: 12

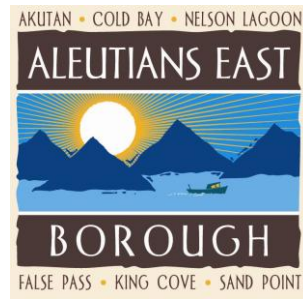
Average H&G Weight (in lbs./King): 4.63

INDIVIDUAL CHINOOK WEIGHTS BY LOT, BY FISH

LOT#	DATE	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	COUNT	LBS
31	7/13/2026	4.20	13.50	18.40	14.70									4	50.80
32	7/14/2026	2.95	4.05	3.75	2.00	3.35	2.75	2.35						7	21.20
33	7/14/2026													0	0.00
34	7/15/2026													0	0.00
35	7/15/2026	2.65	2.60											2	5.25
36	7/16/2026	9.50	15.55											2	25.05
37	7/16/2026	3.20	2.80											2	6.00
38	7/17/2026	4.00	2.95	3.85	2.80									4	13.60
39	7/17/2026	1.95	1.75	4.15	3.45	2.50								5	13.80

Notes: Lot 2 tally sheet missed individual weights for two fish. Actual Lot 2 count was 5 fish, weighing a total of 21.12 pounds.

Source: Alaska's Best Seafoods.



September 22, 2026

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: Support for Enhanced Advisory Committee Participation in the Board of Fisheries Process

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs,

Thank you for accepting public comment on your review of opportunities for public input at board meetings. I am writing to express our strong support for expanding local Fish and Game Advisory Committee (AC) participation within the Board's deliberation process. The local ACs of the Aleutians East Borough, in King Cove, False Pass, Nelson Lagoon and Sand Point, are active, and along with the Unalaska AC are recognized experts of the Alaska Peninsula/Aleutian Islands area (known as ADFG Management Area M), for example, for the purpose of emergency closures during established fishing seasons.¹

The Borough would like to see the Board go back to seating chairs and/or representatives of the ACs at the table to answer questions if they arise. We appreciate the travel allowance afforded by Board Support and extra time allowed for AC representatives to testify. The investment in AC input, including ADFG staffing at AC meetings could be further optimized and valuable to the Board by having ACs on-hand, at the table, available to provide input and answer questions of the Board to review proposals impacting their specific area.

The active presence of AC representatives at the working table would be invaluable, more focused and beneficial to the Board deliberation process. Local Advisory Committees spend countless hours vetting proposals with the communities, commercial fleets, sport fishers, and subsistence users directly impacted by your decisions. Elevating their role during the Board meetings provides several key benefits:

¹ [5 AAC 97.005\(1\)\(G\)\(i\)\(ii\)](#)

- **Direct Access to Local Expertise:** Allowing AC representatives a more interactive role, such as directly answering technical questions from board members during deliberations, ensures that decisions are informed by real-time, on-the-ground observations.
- **Efficiency in Deliberation:** ACs represent a unified voice for an entire region. Giving them an enhanced platform helps synthesize hours of individual public testimony into clear, actionable regional consensus points.
- **Strengthening the Board Process:** The AC system is the backbone of Alaska's regulatory process. Empowering these advisory committees during board work sessions and meetings reinforces the state's commitment to localized, community-driven resource management.

To manage meeting timelines effectively, the Board could implement structured Q&A segments or allocate dedicated time blocks specifically for AC dialogue within the Board meetings. This ensures that localized expertise is fully utilized without disrupting the meeting's momentum.

We believe the Board should use the advisory committees to answer questions that arise from proposals and do away with the committee process. The general public has ample opportunity to comment through public testimony, written public comments, Traditional Knowledge reports and record copy submissions. The 'Committee of the Whole' seems redundant with these comment opportunities to the Board and the public's ability to interact with established local advisory committees sponsored by the ADFG.

Thank you for your dedication to managing Alaska's regulatory process and for considering this meaningful upgrade to public and advisory committee engagement.

Sincerely,



Alvin D. Osterback, Mayor
Aleutians East Borough

**Comment of Area M Seiners Association on Agenda for Sept. 25, 2026 Board Committee
meeting on Process, Management and Research Needs
September 23, 2026**

The Area M Seiners Association provides the following comment for the Committee on Board Process, Management and Research Needs to consider. The agenda for the Sept. 25 Committee meeting includes potential changes to Board procedural practices regarding Traditional Knowledge reports, accepting Agenda Change Requests (ACRs) for out-of-cycle designations of stocks of concern, and “[r]eview of opportunities for public input at board meetings” to consider “[w]hat is the best use of board members’ time and opportunities for public input?”

These issues do warrant serious consideration. However, the Board’s powers may only be exercised by regulation. AS § 16.05.241. Ad-hoc Board policies that have not gone through notice-and-comment rulemaking under AS §§ 44.62.180- .290 are not a valid exercise of Board authority. The Committee should resist any attempt to implement new Board policy regarding any of these matters outside of official rulemaking processes. This is especially true regarding any change to the Board’s ACR policy, which was adopted by rulemaking and thus can only be changed by a rulemaking. *See* 5 AAC 39.999 (ACR policy); AS § 44.62.190(a) (process applies to amendment of a regulation).

Furthermore, considering that the Board is already under Legislative investigation for its procedural and legal compliance, it would seem unwise to take any action altering the current Board process at this time. The Legislative audit will undoubtedly have recommendations for changes to Board procedures to ensure that future Boards comply with the law. Waiting until such time as the Board and the public have received the benefit of the audit report makes more sense than making sweeping internal policy changes now.



Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
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September 23, 2026

Alaska Board of Fisheries

Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs

Re: September 25, 2026 Committee Meeting — Public Process, Transparency, and Meaningful Participation

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Members of the Committee:

Before offering these recommendations, we recognize and commend the members of the Board of Fisheries for the time, effort, and dedication they bring to their responsibilities. Serving on the Board requires members to review complex scientific information, listen to diverse and often competing perspectives, deliberate over difficult issues, and make decisions with profound consequences for Alaska's fisheries and the people and communities that depend upon them.

The Board's fundamental responsibility, to conserve and manage Alaska's fishery resources for the benefit of current and future generations, is one of the most important responsibilities in Alaska. Board members undertake this work in service to Alaska's resources, and their willingness to engage with the public and grapple with difficult management questions deserves recognition.

The Board also operates within a complex legal framework. At each meeting, members work with the Department of Law to understand their legal authorities and obligations and to ensure their actions are consistent with the law. The willingness of Board members to seek and consider legal advice as part of their deliberations is an important component of responsible public decision-making.

Just as important, the Board of Fisheries depends upon public participation. Fishermen, Tribal representatives, subsistence users, community members, scientists, industry representatives and others bring knowledge and experience the Board cannot obtain from documents alone. The public seeks to serve as the Board's trusted advisors, providing information, Traditional Knowledge, experience, and perspectives to help members understand the real-world consequences of the decisions before them.

This relationship between the Board and the public is one of the strengths of Alaska's fisheries management system. It is also why the Board's process matters so much. The quality of the Board's decisions depends not only upon the knowledge and dedication of its members, but upon whether Alaskans have confidence in the process and are willing to participate openly and constructively.

It is in recognition of the importance of this work that we offer the following recommendations. These recommendations are not intended to diminish the Board's authority or to question the

dedication of its members. They are intended to strengthen the processes supporting the Board's work, preserving processes which are functioning well, improving those where there are demonstrated shortcomings and expanding meaningful public participation where practical opportunities exist.

The recommendations are offered with the belief that strengthening transparency, predictability, and public participation will strengthen the Board's ability to fulfill its responsibilities to Alaska's fisheries and the people who depend upon them.

The topics identified for this committee meeting warrant different approaches. Some of the Board's existing processes are working well and should be preserved, while others warrant review and improvement. In each case, however, the Board should first clearly identify the problem it is attempting to solve before changing an established process.

1. Traditional Knowledge Reports

The current Traditional Knowledge (TK) process should be maintained. The process provides a distinct and structured opportunity for individuals and communities with relevant TK to bring information directly to the Board. It provides advance notice and registration, gives the Board an opportunity to hear TK in the context of other information being presented, and creates a clear place for these reports within the public record.

The Board's recent recognition of Traditional Knowledge and Local Knowledge as components of best available science further demonstrates the importance of maintaining a meaningful avenue for this information to reach the Board. The current process should therefore be evaluated based on its actual performance and experience rather than assuming that a three-year review requires substantive changes.

If participants or Board members have identified specific shortcomings, those concerns should be clearly identified and addressed directly. Absent a demonstrated problem, changing a process that is providing a structured opportunity for Traditional Knowledge to inform Board deliberations may create unnecessary uncertainty and could discourage participation.

2. Hatchery-Related Proposals and Committee Timing

BSFA suggests the Board consider expanding the existing Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting into a **Statewide and Hatchery Regulatory Meeting** within the Board's three-year cycle. This would provide a predictable, statewide venue where hatchery-related regulatory proposals can be considered together rather than being dispersed among multiple regional meetings.

There is already a strong precedent for treating hatchery issues as distinct from ordinary regional regulatory matters. The Board held a dedicated Hatchery Committee meeting in October 2023, and hatchery stakeholders have previously recommended that proposals seeking changes to existing hatchery permits be considered at the Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Meeting because such changes can establish precedents with statewide implications.

A statewide hatchery meeting would provide several important advantages. First, it would create a one-stop shop for hatchery-related proposals. Rather than requiring stakeholders to follow hatchery

proposals as they appear in different regional meeting cycles, the Board could consider proposals affecting hatchery production, operations, and interactions with wild stocks together in a single, predictable venue. The current proposal system already recognizes some proposals may apply statewide, affect one region, or affect multiple fisheries, and organizes proposals according to the meeting at which they will be considered.

Second, hatchery production should be evaluated in a statewide context because its biological and management implications do not necessarily stop at regional boundaries. Hatchery-produced salmon can affect fisheries and wild stocks in multiple regions, and decisions regarding hatchery production can have consequences for people and fisheries far beyond the location of the hatchery itself. In particular, the potential effects of hatchery production on wild salmon stocks warrant consideration across regions rather than through a series of isolated regional decisions.

Taking hatchery proposals up piecemeal at regional meetings risks producing a fragmented regulatory framework in which individual proposals are considered primarily through the lens of the region in which a hatchery or fishery is located. A statewide process would allow the Board to consider the cumulative and statewide implications of hatchery production, compare issues across regions, hear from a broader range of affected stakeholders, and consider the available scientific information in a common forum.

A statewide/hatchery meeting would also improve predictability and public participation. Stakeholders would know when hatchery-related regulatory issues are scheduled to come before the Board and could prepare accordingly. Communities, Tribal governments, fishermen, hatchery operators, and others with interests in wild and hatchery-produced salmon would have a clear opportunity to participate in the same regulatory process. This is preferable to requiring participants to monitor multiple regional cycles and potentially travel to several meetings to participate in decisions concerning a statewide issue.

This approach does not eliminate the need for regional consideration where a proposal genuinely concerns a regional allocation or operational issue. Rather, it would establish a clear distinction between regional fisheries management questions and hatchery questions with broader biological, regulatory, or statewide precedent-setting implications.

The Board should therefore consider designating the next Statewide Finfish and Supplemental Issues meeting as a Statewide and Hatchery Regulatory Meeting, with the call for proposals specifically identifying the types of hatchery-related proposals appropriate for consideration at that meeting. The Board could then use the three-year cycle to provide a predictable opportunity to review hatchery regulations and related scientific information comprehensively, while retaining the ability to address truly regional matters through the appropriate regional process.

A statewide and hatchery-focused meeting would provide the Board with a more coherent way to address an issue with statewide implications, reduce piecemeal decision-making, improve predictability for stakeholders, and provide the public with a single, transparent venue for participating in decisions concerning hatchery production and its relationship to Alaska's wild salmon resources.

3. Stocks of Concern Designation & Action Plan

The Board of Fisheries should take a more assertive role in identifying and addressing salmon stocks that meet the criteria for Stocks of Concern. While the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) provides essential scientific information and recommendations, the department should not function as an effective gatekeeper whose recommendations determine whether the Board recognizes a stock's declining status or takes necessary management action.

There are legitimate concerns about whether ADF&G has consistently identified and advanced stocks requiring designation in a timely and reliable manner. When the department does not adequately identify or recommend action for stocks experiencing persistent declines, the Board of Fisheries must be willing to independently examine the available evidence, consider information from other resource agencies and affected communities, and exercise its regulatory authority.

The Policy for the Management of Sustainable Salmon Fisheries, 5 AAC 39.222, establishes a precautionary approach to salmon management. It directs the Board to consider stock status reports, public input, and other available information; determine whether stock yield, management, or conservation concerns exist; and develop or amend management plans as appropriate. The policy also calls for timely management activities, prompt corrective measures, and action plans for stocks of concern.

The Board should not wait for ADF&G to recommend a designation before exercising its own responsibility to protect salmon stocks. Where the available scientific evidence, historical trends, local and traditional knowledge, and public testimony indicate a persistent or serious concern, the Board should proactively evaluate the stock and determine whether a Stock of Concern designation and corresponding management action are warranted.

This approach does not diminish the importance of ADF&G's scientific expertise. Rather, it recognizes the Board of Fisheries has an independent responsibility to oversee the management of Alaska's salmon resources and to ensure the sustainable salmon fisheries policy is implemented effectively. The Board must be willing to challenge deficiencies in the department's identification and management of stocks of concern, rather than allowing the absence of an ADF&G recommendation to prevent necessary action.

We encourage the committee to allow for a Stocks of Concern review process, evaluate whether ADF&G's role as the primary source of recommendations has resulted in delays or missed designations, and identify mechanisms for the Board to independently initiate review and take timely action when the evidence warrants it.

In addition to the above comments, we are using this opportunity to raise another issue which BSFA has raised multiple times in the past, beginning with our October 12, 2009 letter to the Alaska Board of Fisheries specific to this issue...

Under 5 AAC 39.222 (f)(6), a conservation concern means a chronic inability despite the use of specific management measures, to maintain escapements above a sustained escapement threshold, or SET. The policy further defines an SET in five AAC 39.222 (f)(39) as the threshold level of escapement below which the ability of a salmon stock to sustain itself is jeopardized.

Threshold-based escapement goals refer to regular management goals relating to the desired number of spawners. A SET, as defined in the SSFP, is a point below even the lower range of the escapement goal and is a point that, when reached, is intended to trigger even more precautionary conservation measures, if applicable.

Nothing in the SSFP states when a SET shall be established and, to the best of our knowledge, the Department has not even begun to identify the process for establishing a SET, let alone suggested a SET for any salmon stock. However, the definition of a conservation concern is tied directly to a SET; the Board of Fisheries cannot know if you have a conservation SOC until you establish the SET. We recommend that anytime a stock is deemed to be a stock of either a yield or management concern, the Department shall establish a SET.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game has failed to provide the Board of Fisheries with a scientifically defensible method for establishing SETs and apply that method, where appropriate, to stocks experiencing prolonged declines. Furthermore, denying existing metrics of establishing SETs, such as replacement threshold based upon a one-to-one spawner to recruit relationship, has been suggested by non-department scientists and academics. Until the analytical framework is provided, the conservation concern designation cannot function as the meaningful conservation tool contemplated by 5 AAC 39 222.

This is an example of why public input including science and researchers independent from ADF&G are fundamental to providing additional data, context and information for the identification and assessment of critically low stocks. The Board of Fisheries should assess and thoroughly examine declassifications of stocks of concern and changes to escapement goals suggested by ADF&G.

Establishing a scientifically defensible methodology for determining SET should be of the highest priority for the Board of Fisheries and ADF&G. Without this threshold the Board is left without the benchmark necessary to meaningfully apply the conservation concern provisions of its own Sustainable Salmon Fisheries Policy. The result is a regulatory standard existing on paper but with no practical applicability.

4. Review of Opportunities for Public Input at Board Meetings

The review of public input should begin with the recognition that public participation is not simply time taken away from the Board's work. Public participation is part of the Board's work.

The Board of Fisheries makes decisions affecting communities, Tribes, fishermen, businesses, and individuals throughout Alaska. The quality of those decisions depends in part on the Board's ability to hear from people with direct knowledge and experience of the fisheries being considered. The question therefore should be how to make the most effective use of both Board time and opportunities for public participation.

The Board should consider clearly defining the purpose of each existing avenue for participation, including oral testimony, Traditional Knowledge reports, Committee of the Whole discussions, and Record Copies, and establishing reasonable procedures to ensure each is used effectively.

The Board of Fisheries should be working toward a structured process for virtual public testimony modeled on the approach adopted by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council (NPFMC) in recent years. The NPFMC's experience demonstrates it is possible to incorporate remote testimony into an established public meeting process without necessarily extending the length of meetings. The Board should examine this approach as a practical means of reducing barriers to participation while maintaining efficient meeting management.

For many Alaskans, particularly those living in rural and remote communities, participating in a Board of Fisheries meeting requires significant travel costs, time away from work and family, and logistical planning. Airfare, lodging, meals, and other travel expenses can make in-person testimony inaccessible to individuals and communities with limited financial resources. These barriers are especially consequential when Board decisions affect subsistence users, Tribal governments, commercial fishermen, and communities whose perspectives are essential to sound fisheries management.

A reliable virtual testimony process would allow the Board to hear from a broader range of participants without requiring every individual to travel to the meeting location. It would also help ensure public participation is not disproportionately limited to those with the financial resources, institutional support, or geographic proximity necessary to attend in person.

We recommend the Board develop clear procedures for virtual testimony, including:

- Advance registration and scheduling: Establish a transparent process for registering to testify remotely, with clear deadlines and instructions published alongside meeting notices.
- Equal opportunity to participate: Provide virtual participants with a meaningful opportunity to offer oral testimony, subject to reasonable time limits and the same publicly stated rules governing in-person testimony.
- Reliable technology and technical support: Ensure the necessary audio and video infrastructure is available, with technical assistance and contingency procedures when connectivity or equipment problems arise.
- Efficient meeting management: Develop a process for integrating virtual testimony into existing meeting agendas and time allocations, drawing on the NPFMC model to avoid unnecessary expansion of meeting duration.
- Accessibility and geographic inclusion: Consider the needs of participants in rural and remote Alaska, including those with limited internet connectivity, and explore practical options for supporting their participation.
- Transparency and evaluation: Publish the virtual testimony procedures in advance, evaluate participation and technical performance, and make adjustments based on experience and public feedback.

Expanding virtual testimony is an investment in the legitimacy and quality of the Board's decision-making process. The people most affected by fisheries decisions should have a reasonable opportunity to participate, regardless of where they live or whether they can afford to travel.

The Board should treat virtual testimony as a complement to in-person participation, not a replacement for it. By offering both options through a clear and consistent process, the Board can broaden public engagement, reduce unnecessary participation costs, and strengthen trust in the transparency and accessibility of its proceedings. We encourage the committee to make the development of a virtual testimony process a specific recommendation arising from its review of Board of Fisheries process and management.

Most importantly, changes to public participation should be designed to improve the quality and efficiency of the process, not simply to reduce the amount of time the public has to speak.

The Board of Fisheries clearly takes pride in its responsibility to maintain public confidence in its decision-making processes. We appreciate the transparency, consistency and meaningful public participation as the essential components of this credible and accountable public institution.

We encourage the committee to approach this work with the time, openness, and procedural care necessary to maintain trust and ensure future changes to Board process are informed by established policies and meaningful input from the people and communities affected by the Board's decisions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Karen Gillis
Executive Director



Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

September 23, 2026

Märit Carlson-Van Dort
Alaska Board of Fisheries

RE: Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska Comments on Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee Meeting on Board Process, Management and Research Needs

Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members:

The Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Board of Fisheries' processes for Traditional Knowledge, public participation, Stock of Concern determinations, and regulatory development. Tlingit & Haida represents nearly 39,000 Tribal Citizens whose cultural, nutritional, spiritual, and economic wellbeing is inseparable from healthy fisheries and marine ecosystems. As we emphasized in our previous comments submitted to the Board in April 2026 regarding the proposed Traditional Knowledge Policy (5 AAC 96.621), Traditional Knowledge (TK) is a place-based knowledge grounded in Indigenous governance systems, relationships, stewardship practices, and generations of observation.

Agenda Item 2: Proposal Submission Rules and Page Limits

Tlingit & Haida supports clear proposal requirements, but administrative efficiency should not inadvertently create barriers to Tribal participation. Proposal forms and page limits should provide sufficient flexibility for Tribal governments to explain cultural, subsistence, ecological, legal, and Traditional Knowledge considerations that may not fit neatly within standardized proposal fields. Tribal governments may also need to provide maps, resolutions, Traditional Knowledge documentation, or supporting scientific information. The goal should be to make the proposal process easier to navigate without narrowing the information available to decision makers.

We recommend that the Board:

- Maintain reasonable flexibility for Tribal government submissions and supporting materials.
- Clearly distinguish between limits on the regulatory proposal itself and supplemental information necessary to establish the record.

- Provide early notice to Tribes before proposal deadlines to allow for technical assistance and adequate review.
- Avoid rejecting substantive Tribal concerns because of technical formatting deficiencies where those deficiencies can reasonably be corrected.

Agenda Item 3: Three-Year Review of Traditional Knowledge Reports

The Board's adoption of 5 AAC 96.621 in 2026 was an important step; the regulation defines Traditional Knowledge and local knowledge and recognizes them as aspects of best available science and information. The next step should therefore be evaluating whether the Board's process actually allows TK to affect decisions, rather than simply whether TK reports are being received. Tlingit & Haida's earlier comments submitted in April 2026 attached as reference, identified several improvements that remain relevant: TK must be recognized as Tribe-specific and place-based; Tribal outreach should be documented; Board findings should include rationale for how TK was considered; alternative submission formats should be warranted; and TK should remain distinct from local knowledge or public testimony. For this three-year review, Tlingit & Haida recommends that the Board specifically evaluate:

- Move from receiving TK to using TK; the Board should document how TK influenced its analysis, deliberations, findings, amendments, or management decisions. Simply placing a TK report in the record does not demonstrate meaningful consideration. The NPFMC Local Knowledge/Traditional Knowledge Task Force provides several onramps that may be applicable to state fisheries decision-making. We recommend not only resourcing and referencing these onramps, but to seek additional staff, funding or adequate capacity to sustainably implement. Tribes are allies in this request and could conduct additional outreach to our state delegation to support these efforts.
- When information concerns a particular Tribe's traditional territory, citizens, customary practices, or knowledge systems, the Board should make reasonable efforts to engage that Tribal government rather than relying solely upon individual TK holders.
- TK presentations should not function solely as one-directional testimony. Board members should be able and encouraged to ask respectful follow-up questions and understand the geographic, cultural, and ecological context of the information provided.
- Protect sensitive knowledge; the Board should develop procedures for situations where Tribes identify culturally sensitive, proprietary, sacred, site-specific, or otherwise inappropriate information for unrestricted public disclosure.

Our prior comments also noted that a rigid ten-minute presentation window can be poorly suited to TK because knowledge may be communicated through storytelling, relational context, and intergenerational observations. In addition, Alaska's monitoring footprint is enormous and logistically expensive (aircraft/boats, seasonal crews, remote housing, weather windows). That reality collides with hiring and retention constraints. The lack of statewide monitoring clearly demonstrates the need for subsistence users, both tribal and rural citizens, to be meaningfully involved in public dialogue and forums like the Board of

Fisheries. This place-based, generational knowledge fills gaps that short field seasons and limited survey budgets leave behind, especially in remote drainages and coastal areas where state crews can only visit intermittently. When that knowledge is integrated into monitoring design (e.g., escapement surveys, harvest reporting, real-time observations), the data become more accurate and spatially complete. State biologists bring standardized methods, modeling, and stock-assessment tools. Tribal partners bring local site selection, historical baselines, interpretation of unusual patterns, culturally relevant indicators (e.g., fish quality, fat content, spawn timing tied to harvesting). Together, that's co-production of knowledge which tends to reduce uncertainty in stock status, flag emerging problems earlier, and produce datasets managers actually trust when seasons or allocations are debated. Traditional Knowledge and Indigenous Science and local collaboration in monitoring is essential infrastructure for managing fisheries responsibly in Alaska.

One suggestion would be to create a standing committee or working group for complex, nexus or multidimensional topics in which TK holders, Tribes or State partners could aid in knowledge co-production and analysis to supplement and support Board decision-making.

Agenda Item 4: Hatchery Proposals and Committee Timing

Tlingit & Haida encourages the Board to ensure that hatchery issues are considered within a timeframe that allows meaningful evaluation of wild-stock effects, mixed-stock fisheries, subsistence impacts, ecosystem interactions, and Tribal concerns. Hatchery policy discussions should not become procedurally separated from broader questions about salmon abundance and ecosystem health. Where hatchery production may affect wild stocks or fisheries relied upon by Tribal communities, those effects should be evaluated alongside other cumulative pressures affecting salmon. The Board should provide Tribes advance notice of hatchery committee meetings and meaningful opportunities to submit TK and community observations alongside genetic, straying, harvest, sociocultural and economic impacts, and production information.

Agenda Item 5: Stock of Concern Designations and Action Plans

Tlingit & Haida supports a process that allows the Board to respond promptly when salmon populations demonstrate serious conservation concerns rather than requiring communities to wait for the next three-year regulatory cycle. The agenda specifically asks whether Stock of Concern designations should occur at work sessions and whether Agenda Change Requests should be accepted for out-of-cycle determinations. Timeliness matters, and a three-year delay can represent multiple lost salmon returns and can compound impacts on subsistence harvest, food security, cultural transmission, and community wellbeing. Tlingit & Haida therefore recommends maintaining a mechanism for out-of-cycle consideration when credible biological information or TK indicates a substantial conservation concern. The threshold should not depend exclusively upon conventional datasets. Declining harvest opportunity, changes in run timing, disappearance from particular streams, shifts in fish size or condition, and other long-term observations from Tribal citizens can provide important early warning

information. Where a Stock of Concern designation affects a region with federally recognized Tribes, the Department and Board should engage those Tribes early in development of the Action Plan, rather than requesting Tribal input only after a draft plan has largely been developed.

Agenda Item 6: Opportunities for Public Input

Tlingit & Haida recognizes the Board's need to manage increasingly complex meetings efficiently. However, efficiency should not be achieved by reducing meaningful public or Tribal participation. The Board's own process allows substantial written public comments before meetings, followed by progressively shorter submissions as deliberations approach. That makes oral testimony and opportunities to respond during the meeting particularly important when new staff analyses, substitute language, Record Copies, or amendments emerge. Tlingit & Haida recommends preserving multiple pathways for participation rather than treating them as interchangeable:

- Public testimony allows Tribes and citizens to identify priorities and explain community impacts of proposals;
- Traditional Knowledge reports provide a distinct avenue for Indigenous knowledge and should not substitute for Tribal public testimony;
- Committee of the Whole provides an important opportunity for dialogue and clarification; and
- Record Copies allow relevant information to enter the record as issues develop during the meeting.

Remote participation should also remain available wherever practicable. Travel from Southeast Alaska communities can require significant financial resources and staff time, and weather can further constrain participation. Tlingit & Haida previously recommended remote testimony and written or audiovisual TK submissions for precisely these reasons.

Agenda Item 7: Public Input and Draft Regulatory Language

Tlingit & Haida encourages the Board and Department of Law to preserve meaningful opportunities for the public and Tribal governments to understand and respond to regulatory language before final action. This is particularly important when substitute language or substantial amendments emerge during deliberations. A Tribe may support the concept of a proposal while identifying serious concerns with the regulatory language ultimately drafted to implement it. Whenever practicable, substantive draft language should therefore be made available with sufficient time for affected Tribes and the public to review it. For matters directly affecting Tribal interests, Traditional Knowledge, subsistence, or customary and traditional use findings, the Board should also consider whether targeted Tribal engagement is warranted before final action.

Tlingit & Haida appreciates the Committee's willingness to examine how Board processes can be improved. These procedural questions have substantive consequences. Who is able to participate, what information is recognized, when that information enters the record, and whether the Board demonstrates how it considers that information can

ultimately shape fisheries management outcomes and impacts to Our Way of Life. The Board's recent recognition of Traditional Knowledge as an aspect of best available science represents meaningful progress. The next phase should focus on effectiveness and implementation.

Gunalchéesh/Ha for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Peterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent than the last name "Peterson".

Richard J. Peterson

President

WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENT

Alaska Board of Fisheries
 Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
 September 25, 2026, Webconference

Submitted by: Russell Clark, Pro Se

██████████, Kenai, Alaska ██████████

CFEC Permit No. S04H-58304 | ██████████ | ██████████

Re: Clark et al. v. State of Alaska et al., Case No. 3KN-26-00515CI

I. INTRODUCTION

I submit this written comment as a Cook Inlet Eastside Set Net commercial permit holder (CFEC Permit No. S04H-58304) and as the plaintiff in litigation directly arising from board process failures at the May 1, 2026 Alaska Board of Fisheries emergency webconference. The committee's stated agenda covers board process, meeting time utilization, and opportunities for public input. Each of those topics is directly implicated by what occurred at the May 1 meeting. I respectfully urge this committee to address those defects as a matter of good governance and to prevent recurrence in future proceedings.

II. THE MAY 1, 2026 EMERGENCY WEBCONFERENCE: PROCESS FAILURES OF RECORD

The May 1, 2026 special out-of-cycle webconference, convened to consider Proposal 192 (Replace commercial set gillnet opportunity with beach seine gear, Upper Subdistrict ESSN fishery), produced regulation 5 AAC 21.382, effective June 17, 2026. The Board adopted it despite the following documented process failures:

1. **Unanimous Advisory Committee opposition disregarded.** The Advisory Committee voted 0 to 13 against Proposal 192. The Board adopted it 4 to 2. Of 100 on-time public comments addressing Proposal 192 specifically, 84 (84%) opposed it completely. An additional 14 conditioned any support on retaining set gillnets alongside beach seines, a condition Proposal 192 expressly does not satisfy. Only 2 comments expressed neutral or generalized support. Combined opposition to the regulation as adopted: 98 of 100 comments (98%). The Board's own process guidelines call for meaningful consideration of Advisory Committee recommendations. No stated basis for overriding that unanimous Advisory Committee opposition, or the overwhelming public comment opposition, appears in the record.
2. **Out-of-cycle BGP process used to revive a previously rejected proposal.** Proposal 192 had previously come before the Board and failed on a 3 to 4 vote through

the normal regulatory cycle. It was reintroduced out-of-cycle as a Board-Generated Proposal. The use of the BGP mechanism to revive a proposal the Board had already rejected through regular process, without the standard public notice and Advisory Committee review afforded to proposals submitted by the public, raises a structural process concern this committee should address.

4. Pre-vote legal warnings placed on the record and not resolved. Before the Board voted, the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission formally notified the Board in RC022 (April 6, 2026) that Proposal 192 conflicted with the Limited Entry Act (AS 16.43), that CFEC gear designation authority had not been invoked, and that the Department of Law's 60-day review requirement made 2026 season implementation legally doubtful. The Board voted without resolving those objections.

5. Department of Law counsel gave on-the-record warnings before the vote. Assistant Attorney General Edward Lee provided legal advice to Board members at the May 1 meeting, including warnings that Proposal 192 would face potential legal challenges. That advice is preserved in the audio record of the meeting. The Board voted 4 to 2 to adopt the proposal without addressing those warnings.

6. ADF&G; staff analysis expressly identified a CFEC prerequisite. The Department's own staff analysis of Proposal 192 stated: "Adding beach seine as an alternative gear type to S04H permits would require action by the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission prior to the department implementing the fishery for the 2026 season." The Board acknowledged drafting deficiencies in Proposal 192 but did not correct them before voting.

7. Undisclosed conflicts of interest by a voting member. Board Member Svendsen voted in favor of Proposal 192 without disclosing: (a) ownership of property in Poachers Cove Subdivision, which carries an active lease program with a financial interest potentially affected by the outcome; (b) prior public statements that he wants all nets out of Cook Inlet; and (c) membership in the Kenai River Sportfishing Association, an organization with interests directly adverse to commercial set net permit holders. These conflicts were placed on the record in RC021 before the vote. No recusal inquiry was conducted, in contrast to the recusal of Board Member Wood at the same meeting. If Svendsen's vote was the deciding margin in the 4 to 2 adoption, the regulation may have been adopted by an improperly constituted board.

8. The CFEC ratification condition was not satisfied before the regulation took effect. Commissioner Vincent-Lang's May 27, 2026 letter conditioned ADF&G; implementation of the beach seine fishery on ratification by CFEC. At a June 4, 2026 teleconference, CFEC voted 1 to 1 on ratification. A tied vote constitutes a failed motion under CFEC procedures. Despite this, the Department proceeded toward implementation on June 17, 2026 without the prerequisite CFEC action having occurred. The absence of a process within the Board's framework to confirm that implementation conditions have been met before a regulation takes effect is a

structural gap this committee can address.

III. BOARD PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

The failures described above reflect structural gaps in how the Board conducts out-of-cycle proceedings, evaluates legal prerequisites, and applies its ethics and recusal procedures. I respectfully submit the following for the committee's consideration:

1. Legal prerequisite review before adoption. Before any out-of-cycle or emergency action, the Board should require written confirmation from the Department of Law and any co-regulatory agency that all statutory prerequisites to implementation have been identified and satisfied. Legal objections placed on the record should require a written response from counsel before the vote proceeds.

2. On-the-record basis when overriding Advisory Committee recommendations. When the Board overrides a unanimous or near-unanimous Advisory Committee vote, the presiding officer should require each member voting to override to state on the record the specific basis for departing from that recommendation. A 0 to 13 Advisory Committee vote should not be set aside without explanation.

3. Standardized recusal inquiry at every meeting. Before any vote, the presiding officer should conduct a uniform on-the-record inquiry requiring each member to disclose any financial interest, organizational membership, or prior public statement that could constitute a conflict under Alaska ethics rules. The disparity between the recusal of Board Member Wood and the non-recusal of Board Member Svendsen at the May 1 meeting illustrates the need for a consistent procedure applied to every member at every meeting.

4. Transcript production and indexed public access for all meetings. The Board already makes audio recordings available through its meeting materials. That practice should be extended to require written transcripts of all webconferences and in-person meetings, produced and posted to the Board's public website within 30 days of each meeting. Transcripts should be indexed by agenda item to permit efficient public review. The May 1, 2026 meeting audio is the subject of a pending public records request in this litigation; a standing transcript production policy would eliminate the need for such requests and ensure a complete, searchable deliberative record is available to all stakeholders.

5. Emergency and out-of-cycle meeting standards. Special webconferences should be subject to the same procedural protections as regular Board meetings, including adequate public notice, a full Advisory Committee process, and written agency analysis distributed in advance. The May 1 meeting was convened on short notice to consider a proposal with significant allocation consequences for Cook Inlet ESSN permit holders. Affected permit holders had no meaningful opportunity to present economic impact data before the vote was taken. Public comment received after submission of RC022 indicates that no public testimony was heard in the final hour before the Board voted to

adopt Proposal 192.

6. Implementation condition verification. Where a regulation includes conditions that must be met before implementation, the Board's process should include a verification step confirming those conditions are satisfied before the regulation takes effect. This gap contributed directly to the regulatory void that resulted from the failed CFEC ratification vote.

IV. NOTICE OF DELAY IN RELEASE OF 2026-2027 PROPOSAL BOOK

The Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting is scheduled for February 25 through March 8, 2027, with a backup window of March 4 through 15, 2027. The proposal submission deadline for the 2026-2027 cycle was April 10, 2026. As of the date of this comment, September 22, 2026, the 2026-2027 proposal book has not been released and is not available on the Board's public website.

The Upper Cook Inlet meeting is approximately five months away. In prior cycles, the proposal book has been released 90 to 120 days before the relevant meeting, giving permit holders, advisory committees, and the public adequate time to review proposals, prepare testimony, and organize public comment. At the current date, the window for meaningful public participation in the 2027 Upper Cook Inlet cycle is already compressed. Every additional week of delay further reduces the ability of affected communities to participate in the process.

This is not an abstract concern. Permit holders in the Upper Subdistrict ESSN fishery are directly affected by proposals before the Board in this cycle, including matters arising directly from the regulatory conflict addressed in pending litigation. The public's ability to review those proposals, consult with advisors, and prepare substantive comment depends on timely access to the proposal book. Delayed release is not a neutral administrative matter; it systematically disadvantages commercial fishermen who lack the institutional resources to mobilize comment on short notice.

I respectfully put the Board on notice of this delay and request that the committee address the following at the September 25 meeting:

1. The current status of the 2026-2027 proposal book and the anticipated release date.
2. Whether the Board will establish a firm public release deadline for proposal books in future cycles, tied to a fixed number of days before the relevant meeting (recommended: no later than 120 days prior).
3. Whether the Board will provide notice to registered stakeholders and advisory committees at the time of release, rather than relying on permit holders to monitor the Board's website.
4. Whether the Board will provide an extended public comment period for the Upper Cook Inlet cycle if the proposal book is released fewer than 90 days before the

February 2027 meeting.

Timely proposal book release is a prerequisite to meaningful public participation. This committee's mandate to evaluate how the Board most efficiently utilizes time during meetings and public input opportunities necessarily includes the pre-meeting process by which the public learns what is before the Board. I urge the committee to take up this matter and establish a binding schedule.

V. PENDING LITIGATION NOTICE

I am the plaintiff in Clark et al. v. State of Alaska et al., Case No. 3KN-26-00515CI, pending before the Alaska Superior Court, Third Judicial District at Kenai (Judge Joanis). That action challenges the validity of 5 AAC 21.382 as adopted at the May 1, 2026 webconference and seeks injunctive relief. A scheduling conference is set for November 3, 2026.

This comment is submitted in my individual capacity as a permit holder and member of the public. It is not intended to prejudice or waive any position taken in that litigation. Committee members Carpenter and Wood are identified as witnesses in that proceeding. Board members Carlson-Van Dort, Chamberlain, Irwin, Godfrey, and Svendsen are identified as witnesses subject to deposition in that proceeding. I submit this comment solely to place these process concerns before the committee through the public comment process the Board makes available under its own procedures.

VI. CONCLUSION

This committee has a direct opportunity to address the procedural gaps that produced 5 AAC 21.382 and the litigation that followed. Clear standards for legal prerequisite review, Advisory Committee override justification, recusal inquiry, meeting recording and transcript production, and emergency meeting procedure would strengthen the Board's credibility, reduce legal exposure for the State, and restore confidence among the commercial fishing communities most directly affected by Upper Cook Inlet allocation decisions.

I am available to provide oral testimony at the September 25 webconference and to answer any questions from committee members.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Russell Clark", is written over a horizontal line.

Russell Clark, Pro Se

CFEC Permit No. S04H-58304

██████████ Kenai, Alaska ██████████

██████████ | ██████████

Dated: September 22, 2026

Submitted per Notice of Public Meeting signed September 16, 2026 by Art Nelson, Executive Director, ADF&G Boards Support Section. Written comment deadline: 5:00 p.m., September 23, 2026. Comments may be submitted through the board's website at www.boardoffisheries.adfg.alaska.gov, mailed to Alaska Board of Fisheries, P.O. Box 115526, Juneau, AK 99811-5526, or sent by fax to (907) 465-6094.

This comment is submitted by Russell Clark in his individual capacity as a Cook Inlet Eastside Set Net permit holder and pro se plaintiff. It is not submitted on behalf of, and does not represent the position of, the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Conservation Alliance (ACFCA), of which Mr. Clark serves as president.

September 22, 2026



Board of Directors

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President
F/V Seaview

Dennis Zadra
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Alaska Board of Fisheries: ADF&G, Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: **Process, Management & Research Needs**

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

Cordova District Fishermen United (CDFU) appreciates the opportunity to comment, however, the short notice provided for this meeting and comment period, and lack of substantive material available for review prior, is inadequate for meaningful public participation.

The meeting agenda describes broad topics without identifying the specific policies, potential changes, or intended outcomes under consideration. This includes "suggestions from the Department of Law regarding public input and draft regulatory language." Stakeholders cannot provide informed feedback without sufficient notice and a clear understanding of what the committee may recommend, particularly any formal changes being suggested by the Department of Law.

These concerns are especially significant while the Board and its processes are subject to a legislative audit. The audit should be completed and its findings made public before the committee recommends substantive changes to Board procedures, of any kind. Moving forward before that review is complete risks further undermining confidence in a process already facing heightened public scrutiny. In light of that concern, CDFU asks the committee to:

- Refrain from making substantive process changes at this meeting;
- Release future meeting notices and any proposed changes with enough time for meaningful public review; and
- Apply existing rules and policies consistently, including those governing agenda change requests, board-generated proposals, and changes that substantially reverse the intent of submitted proposals.

The Board of Fisheries process relies on informed participation and public trust. Both require transparency, consistency, and ample time to engage.

Sincerely,

Michael Hand, President, Cordova District Fishermen United



Clinton Cook Sr., President
Craig Tribal Association
P.O Box 828
Craig Alaska 99921
Phone: (907) 826-3996
clintoncooksr@craigtribe.org

September 22, 2026

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: Agenda Item 3 – Three-year review of Traditional Knowledge reports. Are changes needed going forward.

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members Carpenter and Wood:

I write on behalf of the Craig Tribal Association as President. This letter is submitted for the September 25, 2026 committee meeting.

The public comment period provided before this meeting is not nearly enough. Notice was updated on September 17, with comments due September 23 for a September 25 meeting. That is insufficient time for a tribal government to consult its citizens, review materials, and prepare a meaningful response on a process that directly affects how our knowledge is heard. The State of Alaska can and must do better. Short windows like this are inconsistent with meaningful participation.

When the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was before Congress, the declared policy of the settlement was that it should be accomplished “with maximum participation by Natives in decisions affecting their rights and property.” That language is in ANCSA itself, Section 2(b), 43 U.S.C. § 1601(b). The Joint Senate and House Conference Committee Report accompanying ANCSA also made clear that Congress expected the State of Alaska and the Secretary of the Interior to take the action necessary to protect the subsistence needs of Alaska Natives. Those were not empty words. Native Alaskans were not to be left out of decisions that affect our lands, waters, fish, and way of life.

The State has a continuing obligation to honor that commitment. A two- or three-day comment window on how Traditional Knowledge is received by the Board of Fisheries does not meet it.

The Craig Tribal Association supports continuing the Traditional Knowledge report process and keeping the ability of tribes and tribal organizations to nominate knowledge holders to speak directly to the Board. That dedicated time is an improvement over three-minute public testimony. It should remain.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Traditional Knowledge must be given the full weight of academic or scientific testimony and reporting. Our knowledge is not anecdotal color commentary. It is observational, tested across generations, local in scale, and grounded in long relationships with the fish and waters of our homelands.

It belongs alongside ADF&G staff reports and peer-reviewed science as best available information. Treating it as lesser information repeats the pattern of dispossession and of leaving Native people out of decisions that affect us.

We ask the Committee to recommend that the Board:

1. Continue the Traditional Knowledge report process and the ability of tribes to provide this information.
2. Treat Traditional Knowledge with the same weight as scientific and academic testimony and reports.
3. Provide adequate notice and comment periods—measured in weeks, not days—when the Board reviews processes that affect tribal participation.
4. Improve opportunities for remote participation so knowledge holders from communities such as Craig are not required to travel at short notice in order to be heard.

The Board took a positive step by creating this process and later placing the policy in regulation. The three-year review should strengthen that step, not weaken it, and the State should match its process to the promises made when ANCSA was enacted, and give any TEK the same evidentiary value as any state sponsored data.

Respectfully submitted,


Clinton E. Cook, Sr.
President Craig Tribal Association

Public Comment: Protect Meaningful Participation in the Board of Fisheries Process

September 23, 2026

**To: Alaska Board of Fisheries, Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
Attention: Chair Märit Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members Tom Carpenter and Mike Wood
From: Ken Duffus, individual Alaska fisherman, Upper Cook Inlet drift fleet and other fisheries
Re: September 25, 2026 committee meeting; request to defer substantive changes and extend public comment**

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

I submit these comments as an individual Alaska fisherman participating in the Upper Cook Inlet drift fleet and other fisheries. I oppose using this abbreviated process to adopt, implement, or finalize recommendations for consequential changes to the public's participation in Board of Fisheries decisions. Please postpone substantive action and, if the September 25 meeting proceeds, limit it to receiving information, listening to the public, and establishing a transparent schedule for further review.

The notice is dated September 16, with written comments due September 23 at 5:00 p.m.; that provides seven calendar days from the notice date to the comment deadline, not nine. The meeting is September 25, and the meeting page identifies September 17 updates to the notice and agenda. ([Official notice] (https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2026-2027/process_9-25-26/notice_9-17-26.pdf); [meeting page](<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fisheriesboard.meetinginfo&date=09-25-2026&meeting=webconference>)) That is not an adequate opportunity, in my judgment, for fishermen to evaluate potentially far-reaching procedural changes, consult one another, and offer informed alternatives.

The agenda is not confined to meeting housekeeping: it includes proposal-submission requirements, Traditional Knowledge reports, hatchery-related proposal timing, stock-of-concern designations and out-of-cycle Agenda Change Requests, public-input opportunities, and Department of Law suggestions concerning public input and draft regulatory language. ([September 25 agenda] (https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2026-2027/process_9-25-26/agenda_9-17-26-2.pdf)) These subjects deserve specific proposed language, an explanation of the problem each change would solve, and time for affected users to respond.

Meaningful notice and a complete public record

Alaska's Open Meetings Act requires reasonable and consistent public notice; it does not make every short-notice meeting automatically unlawful. ([AS 44.62.310(e)](<https://codes.findlaw.com/ak/title-44-state-government/ak-st-sect-44-62-310/>)) My objection is that the short comment window, the significance of the subjects, and the lack of specificity about proposed outcomes together undermine meaningful participation.

The Board has already received direct guidance on this issue. In its 2019 investigation of the Board's Upper Cook Inlet meeting-location decision, the Alaska Ombudsman found inadequate notice and rejected reliance on "subject to change" agenda language as sufficient notice in those circumstances. ([Ombudsman report J2019-0374](<https://ombud.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Ombudsman-Final-Public-Report-Board-of-Fisheries-J20190374.pdf>)) The committee should avoid repeating that problem through unspecified changes introduced during this meeting.

I request the following safeguards:

- ****A listening-only meeting:**** Do not adopt or implement substantive changes, or finalize recommendations on them, on September 25. Publish any preliminary options for later review.
- ****A meaningful response period:**** Provide at least 30 days after publication of the complete proposed changes and supporting materials before closing comments on substantive recommendations. This is my requested participation safeguard, not an assertion that every committee discussion requires a statutory 30-day notice.
- ****Specific disclosure:**** Publish proposed language, reasons for each change, anticipated effects on fishermen's participation, the committee's authority, and the next decision-making steps. Make public-facing Department of Law recommendations available, subject to legitimate privilege protections.
- ****Usable public participation:**** Honor the notice's commitment to live testimony, provide clear phone and Zoom instructions, and allow testimony before recommendations are finalized. ([Official notice] (https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/2026-2027/process_9-25-26/notice_9-17-26.pdf)) Allow supplemental written comments responding to information first presented at the meeting.
- ****Transparent record-copy practice:**** Post proposed substitute language promptly, identify material changes from the original proposal, and allow a meaningful response before action. A last-minute record copy should not become a means of avoiding public scrutiny.

Follow existing requirements before changing them

The ACR regulation limits qualifying requests to conservation purposes, correction of regulatory errors, or unforeseen effects, and restricts predominantly allocative requests absent new information the Board finds compelling. ([5 AAC 39.999](<https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/alaska/5-AAC-39.999>)) I request express, proposal-specific explanations of how those standards are met, rather than treating out-of-cycle review as a routine alternative to the established cycle.

The Board's published standing rules also say not to change or reverse a proposal's intent through amendment, and identify a separate board-generated proposal as the appropriate alternative. ([Standing Rules 91-128-FB] (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/regulations/regprocess/fisheriesboard/pdfs/findings/ff91128x.pdf>)) I ask the Board to honor that safeguard and not use board-generated proposals merely to revive previously defeated measures without a demonstrated reason for accelerated consideration and a genuine opportunity for public response.

For stocks of concern, the sustainable salmon policy provides for the Board to make determinations in consultation with ADF&G, using the stock-report and management-plan process. ([5 AAC 39.222(d)] (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/regulations/alaska/5-AAC-39.222>)) I request that ADF&G's scientific assessments and recommendations remain central, that departures be explained publicly, and that timing changes not bypass scientific review or meaningful public input.

If a proposed "policy" would function as a rule of general application governing the public, its label does not necessarily remove it from the Administrative Procedure Act. ([AS 44.62.640(a)(3)] (<https://law.justia.com/codes/alaska/title-44/chapter-62/article-8/section-44-62-640/>)) Please obtain and explain the applicable legal classification before implementing any such change, and follow the required rulemaking process where it applies.

Respect independent review and rebuild trust

July reporting confirms that legislators authorized a process-focused audit of the Board covering October 12, 2023 through July 1, 2026, with the May action against five Area M regulations cited in support of the audit request. ([KMXT reporting](<https://www.kmxt.org/news/2026-07-21/rep-stutes-legislators-approve-state-audit-of-board-of-fisheries>)) I urge the Board to incorporate the audit's findings before making major structural changes, without delaying legally necessary corrective action or urgent conservation measures supported by a documented basis.

Efficiency should mean a clearer, more predictable process, not fewer opportunities for fishermen to understand and respond to proposed decisions. Please include this letter in the meeting record, acknowledge receipt, and respond publicly to the requests to defer substantive action, disclose proposed changes, and extend comment.

Respectfully,

Ken Duffus

Individual Alaska fisherman

Upper Cook Inlet drift fleet and other fisheries

Krissa A. Huston

Juneau, Alaska

September 23rd, 2026

Board of Fisheries Committee

Madam Carlson-Van Dort, Chair Tom Carpenter, and Mike Wood

SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Hello all and thank you for the opportunity to comment. My English name is Krissa Huston. My Tlingit name is Aana Tlaá and I come from the *Wooshkeetaan* shark clan. I am commenting on behalf of myself. I am a subsistence harvester, social scientist, a previous seafood industry professional, and I hold degrees in Fisheries Technology, Marine Sciences, and Marine Policy. I propose that the board works with the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association to create a **Pacific Herring Stock Structure Working Committee** composed of diverse community members, tribal nations, and researchers to address the need for a new analysis of the current biological stocks of Pacific Herring in the Gulf of Alaska. This working group could inform policy through a Management Strategy Evaluation (MSE) framework as proven successful for the Atlantic Cod Stock Structure Working Committee developed through their multi-year research project that informed the New England Fishery Management Council of new considerations for stock assessments (McBride & Smedbol, 2022; Chapman & Singer, 2021).

This type of framework has the potential to inform more accurate stock assessment models that include fish productivity change due to climate through observational models and considering age population models. Through scientific research such as genetics, tagging, and otolith microchemistry paired with Indigenous Science and community driven interests, collaborative research can inform new management models. Herring production through cultivation of marinescapes is a Tlingit management method that should be considered as well as reintroduction methods such as the transplantation of herring stock to new habitat (Thornton, 2010). Additionally, **accurate age population models would allow fisheries management to set appropriate catch limits in order to sustain all age classes of herring enough to feed the**

ecosystems and ensure age stocks are not pushed to extinction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR KNOWLEDGE REPORTS

The current separation of Indigenous Knowledge into report is likely not a productive use of time. In previous meetings such as the Southeast Finfish BOF in February 2025 the instructions and separation were confusing to witness. Intricate place based knowledge about herring from the Tlingit people has been disregarded in the Board of Fish and ADFG processes because oral history has been seen as not legitimate ‘data’, and therefore unable to contribute to management. Even with the implemented knowledge reports, the “traditional knowledge” is not considered for influencing management. Additionally, knowledge holders confused by the new process both gave testimony that included their knowledge AND completed a knowledge report. This shows the great efforts that tribal citizens have made to participate in the Board of Fish process.

The inclusion of Indigenous peoples in fish management has been an issue since the beginning of commercialized fisheries in Alaska. There is a history of disregard for Indigenous Science which has not served those engaging in the public process. Instead of separating the traditional knowledge to a report, testimony should be given with equal recognition of Western and Indigenous sciences and their validity in fisheries management. In many Alaskan fisheries, commercial and subsistence fishers have distinct experience and knowledge systems but often the commercial narrative in power overshadows other knowledge systems. Now we have the opportunity to adapt how we engage with community members in culturally relevant and respectful meeting protocols.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my proposals. I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspectives.

Gunalchéesh, thank you,

Krissa Huston

Write your comment here:

**To: Alaska Board of Fisheries
Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
Meeting: Friday, September 25, 2026, 12:00 noon (Zoom)
Comments for: Wednesday, September 23, 2026 deadline**

**From: Buck Laukitis
Homer, Alaska
buck.magicfish@gmail.com**

Subject: Enforce the Board process we already have — do not rush a rewrite

Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members:

Thank you for the chance to comment on Board process. I am a commercial fisherman who participates in Alaska's public fishery management processes. I am writing about process, not about the merits of any single Area M or Western Alaska allocation outcome.

1. The Board's process is already under formal review.

In May 2026, the Acting Attorney General voided Board actions on Proposals 126, 127, 141, 147, and 148 under the Executive Branch Ethics Act (Order of Corrective Action, May 19, 2026; Department of Law disapproval letter to the Lieutenant Governor, May 20, 2026). In July 2026, the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee authorized a special audit of Board process covering roughly October 2023 through July 1, 2026 — including compliance with the Ethics Act, the Administrative Procedure Act, Board policies on emergency petitions and Board-generated proposals, and transparency of public notice and comment. That audit is not finished.

Given that record, this Committee should be careful about rushing structural changes to proposal rules, Stock of Concern timing, out-of-cycle SOC Agenda Change Requests, Traditional Knowledge report practice, hatchery proposal timing, or public-input formats while the auditors are still scoring those same topics. The problem the public saw was not mainly a missing handbook — it was failure to follow the handbook. Redesign mid-audit can look like rewriting the rules instead of enforcing them.

2. Short notice undercuts meaningful public process.

This meeting's comment window was short relative to the breadth of the agenda. Fishermen finishing the summer season cannot meaningfully engage vague, open-ended process topics on a few days' notice. If the Committee intends lasting changes, it should use a normal notice period, publish draft policy language when possible, and allow written comment after any draft is posted.

3. Follow existing policies until they are formally changed.

Until the audit is complete and the full Board adopts clear amendments:

- Apply Agenda Change Request criteria as written; do not use ACRs as a back door for out-of-cycle policy that fails those criteria.**
- Use Board-generated proposals sparingly and only under existing Board policy — not to revive proposals that failed in a prior cycle.**

- Do not “flip” a proposal so that the adopted action reverses the original proposal’s intent without proper notice and opportunity to comment.
- On Stocks of Concern, stay aligned with the sustainable salmon policy and Department recommendations for listing and delisting; if the Board wants a new out-of-cycle SOC ACR path, that should be a transparent rule change after the audit, not an ad hoc practice.
- Make Record Copy language available in time for the public to respond before final action.

4. Ethics and conflicts belong in daylight, not in private deal-making.

The public already saw five adopted proposals voided because the vote process failed ethics review. Whatever the confidential details of those proceedings, the corrective message is clear: disclosure and recusal rules are real, and irregular process does not survive review. The Board should tighten consistent disclosure and recusal practice and wait for the legislative audit’s ethics findings before inventing new process shortcuts.

5. Ask of this Committee — and a closing point.

Please (a) treat this meeting as listening and inventory, not as a rush redesign; (b) keep lasting process changes modest and well-noticed, especially while the legislative audit is still scoring the same topics; (c) if you change anything, bring draft text back with normal notice and a full-Board vote; and (d) prioritize predictability and equal access for working fishermen, Advisory Committees, Tribes, and the Department.

My bottom line is simpler than a rewrite of the whole handbook. Alaska’s Board of Fisheries process — notice, proposals, ACRs, public comment, Department advice, ethics and recusal — is basically sound when people follow it. What has broken trust is misapplication: members who stretch or ignore the rules that are already on the books. The Acting Attorney General’s May 2026 ethics voiding of five adopted proposals is Exhibit A. The cure is not inventing a new process under short notice. The cure is putting the right people in the chairs and making them follow the process we already have.

Respectfully submitted,

Buck Laukitis
Homer, Alaska
buck.magicfish@gmail.com

Hayden Linscheid
Kodiak

I believe the public should get more time to form comments for this impromptu meeting.

REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN J. McCABE

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE DISTRICT 30

SESSION
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Room 102
Phone: (907) 465-2679
Toll Free: (800) 505-2678



DISTRICT
600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, AK 99654
Phone: (907) 376-2679
Rep.Kevin.McCabe@akleg.gov

September 22, 2026

Via Email Only

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
Chair Märit Carlson-Van Dort, Members Tom Carpenter and Mike Wood
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Re: Public comment for the September 25, 2026 committee meeting

Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members,

Thank you for taking up the question of how the Board uses its time and how Alaskans are heard. I have served on the House Special Committee on Fisheries since 2020. In that time I have watched the Upper Yukon, the Kenai, and now Prince William Sound go dark. The Board did not cause those closures alone. But I believe the way the Board does business makes it harder to put the resource first and easier for well-funded, organized interests to shape outcomes. I offer the following specific recommendations.

1. Make testimony accessible to Alaskans who work for a living.

In-person blue-card sign-up and open-ended testimony periods favor paid representatives who can sit through a full week of meetings. A fisherman, guide, or subsistence user from the Mat-Su or a rural community often cannot. I ask the Board to:

- Offer remote testimony by phone and video at every regulatory meeting, with remote sign-up available before the meeting begins.
- Schedule testimony in published time blocks by region or proposal group, so Alaskans know when they will be heard.
- Protect the three-minute individual slot and the ten-minute advisory committee slot, and prioritize advisory committee reports. Our local ACs are the Board's own public forum and should be heard early.

2. Give the public one clear place to comment.

The Board's website should not require Alaskans to hunt for how to be heard. Today the public has to work through a complicated site, meeting by meeting, to find the right page and the right deadline. It should not be up to the public to figure that out. I ask the Board to:

- Place a clearly labeled "Submit Public Comment" button on the Board's home page and on every meeting page.
- Send that button to one single submission portal for every meeting, subject, and proposal, where the commenter selects the meeting and proposal numbers from a list.
- Show the comment deadline for each open meeting on that same page, in plain language.

3. End the late-paper advantage.

The public must submit written comments about two weeks before a meeting. Yet record copies continue to arrive during the meeting, sometimes overnight before deliberations. That lets organized groups respond at the last minute when ordinary Alaskans cannot. I ask the Board to:

- Post Department staff reports, data, and recommendations well before the written comment deadline, so the public can respond to them.
- Limit late record copies to new information, genuine corrections, or responses to material first raised at the meeting.

4. Put conservation before allocation.

Too many Board discussions begin as allocation fights and treat stock health as an afterthought. The process of the entire Board seems driven to focus on stakeholders and not the resource. I ask the Board to open each proposal group with a Department briefing on stock status, escapement performance, and habitat conditions, before any allocation discussion. The Board's statutory purpose is the conservation and development of the resource, not the protection of the stakeholder. The agenda should reflect that order.

5. Give Alaskans one honest set of numbers.

Alaskans should not have to decode data from multiple formats to understand what is happening to a stock. I ask the Board to require a standardized, plain-language summary for each stock under consideration: numbers of fish, pounds, trend over time, and the management goal. Board members and the public should be working from the same page.

6. Strengthen Traditional Knowledge reports.

Traditional Knowledge belongs in the Board's record. It reflects thousands of years of observation that no survey or biologist can replace, and it matters to the Native communities whose way of life,

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Re: Public comment for the September 25, 2026 committee meeting
September 22, 2026
Page 3

and often entire culture, depends on these fish. I support keeping Traditional Knowledge reports. I ask the Board to:

- Accept Traditional Knowledge reports in writing in advance, in addition to oral presentation, so they are in board workbooks.
- Have Board members address relevant Traditional Knowledge on the record during deliberations, so presenters know they were heard and not merely listened to.
- Give Traditional Knowledge real weight alongside survey data, not treat it as anecdote. Many of our data series cover a few decades. Traditional Knowledge covers generations. Where the two disagree, the Board should treat that disagreement as a warning sign worth investigating, not a reason to set Traditional Knowledge aside.

7. Apply the Governor's regulatory reform order to the Board's own regulations.

Administrative Order 360 directs all executive branch agencies, boards, and commissions to improve the quality, transparency, and efficiency of state regulations. The Department has sought public input on some of its own regulations under that order. I have seen no comparable review of the Board's fishing regulations, which are among the most complex in the state code. I ask the Board to state publicly how it is complying with AO 360. I also ask the Board to begin a review that identifies outdated, redundant, or unclear provisions and publishes plain-language summaries of each management plan. The goal is not fewer protections for fish. The goal is regulations that Alaskans can find, read, and understand.

Conclusion

None of these changes requires new statute. They are choices within the Board's own control. They would make the process fairer to working Alaskans, more transparent to the public, and more focused on the fish themselves, which is what the Alaska Constitution requires. Article VIII, Section 4 directs that fish and other replenishable resources be utilized, developed, and maintained on the sustained yield principle. The fish do not care which user group wins the allocation fight. They need a process that puts them first. Alaskans need a process that puts them first.

Thank you for your service and your consideration.

Respectfully,



Representative Kevin J. McCabe
Alaska House of Representatives
House District 30



Established 1955

North Pacific Fisheries Association
P.O. Box 796 Homer, AK 99603
npfahomer@gmail.com // www.npfahomer.com

PC17

Alaska Board of Fisheries
ADF&G Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

September 23, 2026

RE: Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs, September 25, 2026

Chair Carlson-Van Dort and Members of the Committee,

North Pacific Fisheries Association (NPFA) represents more than 65 independent commercial fishermen, their families, and crewmembers who harvest halibut, salmon, sablefish, Pacific cod, crab, and herring throughout the waters of Alaska. NPFA has a long history of active participation in the Alaska Board of Fisheries process, as well as other state, federal, and international fisheries regulatory processes.

NPFA respectfully asks the Committee to make no recommendations for substantive changes to the Board process at this meeting, and to defer that work until the legislative audit of the Board is complete and its findings are public.

Notice and Agenda.

The notice and agenda do not allow for meaningful public input. The meeting notice is dated September 16 and was revised September 17. Written comments are due today, one week later, when many of our members are still fishing or just coming off the water. As of this morning, the only documents posted for this meeting are the notice and a tentative agenda. Nothing else has been made available, including the “suggestions from the Department of Law regarding public input and draft regulatory language” listed as Agenda Item 7. The public is being asked to comment on recommendations it has not been permitted to see.

The notice and agenda do not align. The notice describes a discussion of Traditional Knowledge reports and how to use board meeting time and public input efficiently. The agenda goes much further: proposal submission requirements, the timing of hatchery proposals, Stock of Concern designation timing, whether the Board should accept Agenda Change Requests for out-of-cycle Stock of Concern determinations, and draft regulatory language from the Department of Law. These are substantive policy matters that were not described in the meeting notice, and several directly impact how and when fishermen can be heard.

Timing and Public Trust.

In July, the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee unanimously approved an audit of the Board’s process and procedures, including its compliance with public notice requirements, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Executive Branch Ethics Act. That audit followed the Acting Attorney General’s unprecedented May decision to void five Area M regulations after finding that board members with undisclosed conflicts of interest cast the deciding votes, as well as a lawsuit and ethics complaints from tribes and fishing organizations. Six federally recognized tribes notified the Board of those conflicts in writing in February. The Board did not act.

Against that backdrop, a three-member committee convening on short notice to reshape the rules for public input, before the audit findings are known, will be perceived by many as getting ahead of the review rather than learning from it. Whatever the intent, the Board is not in a position to disregard that appearance and risk further eroding public trust.

Adherence to Existing Rules.

NPFA's concerns are not abstract. In March, the Board adopted Proposal 186, accepted out of cycle on stated coho conservation grounds, through substitute language that substantially rewrote the original proposal, and without public comment on the new language. The result was a permanent restructuring of the Upper Cook Inlet drift fishery a full year ahead of the regular Upper Cook Inlet cycle. We highlight this not to relitigate the decision, but because it touches nearly every issue on this agenda: Agenda Change Request criteria, the use of Record Copies to introduce substantially new language, and the public's ability to respond before the Board acts.

NPFA's specific concerns with respect to agenda items are as follows:

Agenda Change Requests (Item 5b): The ACR process should not be expanded to allow out-of-cycle Stock of Concern determinations. Stock of Concern listings and delistings should follow ADF&G recommendations under established policy and the regular meeting cycle.

Public input (Items 6 and 7): Any change to testimony, Committee of the Whole, or Record Copies should expand, not narrow, the public's access to the Board. Substitute language introduced by Record Copy should be posted with enough time for the public to review and respond prior to final deliberation.

Hatchery proposals (Item 4): Changes to when hatchery proposals are considered affect fishermen and regional aquaculture associations statewide and should not be decided without proper notice to those affected.

Board-generated proposals and substitute language: The Board should follow its own policies. No board-generated proposals to bring back out of cycle what failed in cycle, and no substitute language that reverses the intent of the proposal as noticed.

NPFA respectfully requests that the Committee:

1. Treat this meeting as scoping only and make no recommendations for substantive process changes;
2. Defer substantive changes until the legislative audit is complete and its findings are public;
3. Publish any proposed changes, including the Department of Law's suggestions and draft regulatory language, with no fewer than 30 days for written comment, and schedule their consideration outside the fishing season; and
4. Apply existing policies consistently, including those governing Agenda Change Requests, board-generated proposals, substitute language, and Stock of Concern designations.

The Board cannot successfully manage fisheries to the expected standard without input from affected stakeholders. Affected stakeholders will stop participating in the process unless they trust it is balanced, transparent, and consistent. That trust has been eroding. Rebuilding faith in the process should be a top priority for the Board, one that can be accomplished by openly and consistently following existing rules, providing time and notice sufficient for meaningful participation, and championing the stakeholder-driven nature of Alaska's fisheries management.

Thank you for your consideration,

Malcolm Milne

President, North Pacific Fisheries Association

Northwest Setnetters Association
PO Box 870
Kodiak, AK 99615

September 23, 2026

Alaska Board of Fisheries
Boards Support Section
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

RE: September 25, 2026 Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs

Dear Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries:

The Northwest Setnetters Association appreciates the opportunity to comment regarding the September 25 meeting of the Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs.

NWSA supports thoughtful efforts to review and improve the Board of Fisheries process. As Alaska's fisheries are complex, and the Board is tasked with making difficult decisions that affect stakeholders across the state, a clear, transparent, and accessible public process is essential to ensuring that the Board has the information it needs and that Alaskans have a meaningful opportunity to participate.

NWSA respectfully encourages the Board and its Process Committee to provide sufficient time and opportunity for stakeholder involvement as this work moves forward. The short notice and comment period associated with the September 25 meeting makes meaningful organizational participation difficult, most especially so this time of year as the salmon season is just wrapping up and fishermen are not yet expecting Board of Fish meetings. We hope this meeting will be viewed as the beginning of a broader conversation rather than the conclusion of one.

As the Committee continues its work, NWSA encourages the Board to incorporate information and findings from the legislative audit that are relevant to the Board's process before making any significant procedural changes, and to provide adequate advanced notice and reasonable comment periods so stakeholders can participate meaningfully before any public process changes are finalized.

NWSA believes that process improvements are most effective when they are developed through the same principles they are intended to strengthen: transparency, predictability, broad participation, and careful consideration of the available information. To that end, we support verified information coming from a third party when considering improvements to public process.

We recognize the considerable amount of work required of Board members, Department staff, and Boards Support, and we appreciate the Board's willingness to examine how its processes can improve. We respectfully ask that stakeholders be given meaningful opportunities to participate

as the Committee's work progresses, and we look forward to contributing constructively to that effort.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Adelia B. Myrick". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Adelia Myrick
President, Northwest Setnetters Association

Regarding the Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs:

As a fisherman and stakeholder, I would like to flag some issues I have with the way this meeting was announced and set forth. First, this committee meeting was announced less than 10 days before it takes place, during a time when many fishermen and stakeholders are finishing up their seasons and not expecting BOF meetings. This makes it appear that the Board is not interested in meaningful public commentary, or perhaps is hoping there won't be public engagement at all. Even if that was not the intent, with this happening at the tail end of a tumultuous board cycle, it further erodes public trust in the Board's process.

Secondly, the agenda items and meeting documents are vague and unclear. This further raises suspicions, especially when the public can't tell if there are underlying motives for this meeting. For Traditional Knowledge reports, for example, the agenda item just asks, "Are changes needed going forward?" As a stakeholder, I am immediately suspicious that there is an underlying motive for a change that the Board wants to enact, but it isn't clearly stated for the public to comment on.

Finally, the Board is currently under a legislative audit process, and the seeming urgency of this meeting being held before the audit has finished is suspicious and unnecessary.

I would like the public to regain trust in the BOF process, but the lack of transparency, the short timeline, and the current track record of this Board cycle are making that difficult. I encourage the Board to allow more engagement with the public before making decisions that have far-reaching effects to its stakeholders.

**Respectfully,
Sonja Rootvik Ewing**



Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance Reserve PC20

1008 Fish Creek Rd, Juneau, AK 99801

Cell (907) 465-7666 /Fax (907) 517-5470

Email: Kathy@seafa.org

September 23, 2026

Chair Carlson Van-Dort

Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs

Alaska Board of Fisheries, Board Support Section

P.O. Box 115526

Juneau, AK 99811-5526

RE: Board Process, Management and Research Needs

Dear Board Process Committee Members,

Southeast Alaska Fishermen's Alliance (SEAFA) is a commercial fishing association representing our members involved in the SE AK salmon, crab, shrimp and Gulf of Alaska/SE longline fisheries. Our 300+ members are approximately 80% state residents. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the agenda for the Committee on Process, Management. We understand it is difficult to outline the possibilities of what you will be discussing until you are in the conversation but realize that it is also difficult for the public to know what the thinking was behind how an agenda item was written. That said we sincerely hope that you move slowly with any changes, providing opportunities for the public and advisory committees to comment on the committee recommendations as they are brought forward from the committee to the board and allow the board enough time to adjust recommendations after you have heard from the public. If the recommendations change enough, please take the time to hear from the public again before final action.

2. Proposal submission rules: requirement to use the form and page limit. We have no comment on the requirement to use the form as we are not sure what the issue is here but we would encourage caution in setting an overall page limit as sometimes suggested regulatory text can be quite lengthy. But we also understand that limiting the number of pages is likely a reaction to trying to prevent proposers from providing all their justifications instead of concisely stating the purpose of the proposal.

3. Traditional Knowledge Reports: It is hard to evaluate the effectiveness of the Traditional knowledge reports as the public is still working to understand how the process works. We really appreciate that there was a deadline prior to the meeting starting for signing up for TK reports and the Boards efforts to prevent testimony on

individual proposals being given during this time frame. That helps focus the TK reports and make the process more efficient.

4. Submittal of Hatchery Production related Proposals. The key to this is HATCHERY PRODUCTION-related proposals should be heard every three years at the statewide meeting. Hatchery proposals relating to allocation of production where, when and who harvests should continue to be specific to regional cycles, as well as terminal harvest (THA) and special harvest area (SHA) proposals for defining the area, changing the area or who can participate in a THA (which is allocative) and institutionalizing them into regulation.

5. Stocks of Concern process should be guided by ADF&G. Individuals should not be allowed to propose stocks of concern as an Agenda Change Request as it takes away from the Dept's ability to provide through scientific analysis on the regional cycle stocks of concern and developing action plans. The analysis for a stock of concern does not start a month before the work session but long before that. Already there is not a robust chance to review stocks of concern or have the local advisory committees able to review them before showing up to a board meeting in-cycle. This would be further exacerbated by the Dept having to work on stocks that were not part of their cyclical work plan.

6. Public Testimony at Meetings. The strength of the State of Alaska Board of Fisheries and Game is the public opportunity to meaningfully participate and provide their knowledge and information to the scientific information provided by the Dept. However, there is increasing concern about the Board's acceptance of ACR's that do not meet the Board's own established criteria for an ACR. Additionally, there is growing and valid concerns related to the increased use of Board generated proposals and significantly changing or amending a proposal with no opportunity to testify to the effects the changes would have on the participants and fisheries. Record Copies are an important part of the board process particularly as you cannot hand a board member any information that has not been submitted. There is also the need to be able to respond to changes and testimony provided that the RC copies compensate for. It would be very helpful if Board members submitted their RC regarding language and other changes in a proposal before the Committee of the Whole so the public would have an opportunity to meaningfully speak to the changes.

Recognizing that sometimes the Committee of the Whole provides a compromise between competing interests that can't always be captured before the committee occurs, if the recommendation is to stop the committee of the whole process in order to shorten up the length of the board meeting, please consider reverting back to the previous board policy of allowing 6 minutes for Organizations and 3 minutes for individuals and the 10 or 15 minutes for the Advisory Committee members. As a

representative of an organization, it is difficult to speak to all proposals in the 3 minutes allowed to testify and sometimes a proposal that doesn't stand a chance of passing is actually the proposal that develops legs and you are unable to testify to. The committee process gives an additional opportunity to speak to a proposal you previously didn't and provides crucial details and perspectives on the individual proposals.

7. Dept of Law suggestions regarding public input and draft regulatory language. It's unclear what the intent of this section is, and SEAFA would be very concerned if what is being proposed is the expectation that the Dept of Law will be providing draft regulatory language on public input. Or is the consideration of the ability to get draft regulatory language written during a board meeting for action? Please clarify this item prior to implementing any new policies and procedures and allow the public to meaningfully respond.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments on the subjects in front of the Board of Fish committee on Board Process, Management and Research Needs. We look forward to listening to the meeting on Friday and providing further input to the process later.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathy Hansen", followed by a long horizontal line.

Kathy Hansen
Executive Director



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

Phone: (907) 586-2820

E-mail: ufa@ufa-fish.org **Website:** www.ufa-fish.org

September 23rd, 2026

Chair Carlson Van-Dort
Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs
Alaska Board of Fisheries
Board Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

RE: Comments on Agenda Items 2, 4, 5, and 6 for the Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs Meeting.

Dear Chair Carlson-Van Dort,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is a commercial fisheries trade association representing 37 commercial fishing organizations and independent fishermen who participate in the state and federal fisheries off Alaska. UFA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Committee on Board Process, Management and Research Needs agenda for the meeting scheduled on September 25, 2026. Below, please see UFA's comments on agenda items 2, 4, 5, and 6.

2: UFA is concerned with the trend in Agenda Change Request (ACR) submissions and adoptions in recent years and believes that the Board has moved away from its well-established criteria for adoption of ACRs. The increase in ACR adoption is leaving affected stakeholders on edge, as they never know if their "off cycle" will now be their "in cycle." This adds mental and financial burden to stakeholders as they build their fishing time and financial budgets to be able to attend their in-cycle meetings; they now need a contingency plan for the adoption of ACRs that may directly impact their fishery.

4: For proposals related to hatchery production levels, UFA recommends the Board of Fisheries create a formal policy to only accept these proposals once every three years at the Statewide Board of Fisheries Meeting. This policy should also apply to ACRs. To be

clear, there are certain hatchery related proposals that are region specific and need to continue to be heard in region. Proposals related to allocation between gear types within SHA's and THA's must stay in region. UFA recommends language be clear if a Board Policy is adopted in relation to hatchery proposals to maintain a separation between hatchery production level change proposals and allocative proposals surrounding management of SHA's & THA's.

5: UFA does not support ACRs for out of cycle Stock of Concern (SOC) determinations brought forward by individuals. UFA supports rigorous, science-based fisheries management, and believes that allowing individuals to bring forward ACRs for SOC determination undermines the Department's full ability to follow their SOC process. UFA is concerned that if individuals are allowed to bring forward ACRs for SOC determination, it will restrict the Department's ability to develop a proper action plan in the compressed time frame of a BOF cycle. UFA believes that instead, if the Department comes forward with an SOC ACR, they have seen the warnings and gone through a thorough analysis to bring forward the proposal and have the necessary action plans already in development.

6: UFA supports the broad public process that is provided at Board of Fisheries meetings with both written and spoken comment opportunities. UFA is, however, unsupportive of new language or proposals that are published after stakeholders have an opportunity to provide testimony. UFA believes that this erodes the public, stakeholder driven process that the Board of Fisheries is structured to use to make decisions. When considering new policy for stakeholder input, UFA would like to emphasize the importance of allowing stakeholders the opportunity to provide testimony on what will be voted on, rather than seeing language change after that opportunity passes.

UFA urges the board to consider an additional review process, such as a request for public comment or an additional meeting prior to implementing any decisions or specific actions that come out of a committee. This will help create transparency and build public trust. As the agenda items listed for this meeting were very broad and general, UFA would like to emphasize the importance of the timely publication of meeting materials, including the in-cycle proposal books, staff comments, and materials for any special BOF sessions.

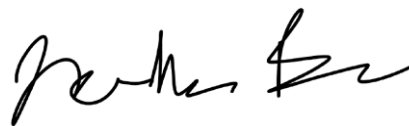
UFA appreciates the stakeholder driven, public process that the Board of Fisheries was built on and UFA is thankful for the opportunity to provide comments for consideration at the upcoming Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs meeting.

Sincerely,



Matt Alward

President



Thatcher Brouwer

Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers • Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association • Alaska Scallop Association •
 Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association • Area M Seiners Association • At-sea Processors Association
 Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association • Bristol Bay Reserve • Cape Barnabas, Inc. • Concerned Area "M" Fishermen
 Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association • Cordova District Fishermen United • Douglas Island Pink and Chum • Freezer Longline Coalition • Fishing Vessel
 Owners Assn • Groundfish Forum • Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association • Kodiak Seiners Association • North Pacific Fisheries Association •
 Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • Northwest Setnetters Association • Petersburg Vessel Owners Association • Prince William
 Sound Aquaculture Corporation • Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association • Seafood Producers Cooperative • Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation
 Alliance • Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance • Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association • Southeast Alaska Seiners • Southern
 Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association • United Catcher Boats • United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters
 Valdez Fisheries Development Association



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USAG'S MAIN PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT, SERVE AND ENHANCE SOUTHEAST ALASKA'S COMMERCIAL GILLNET FISHERY

September 23, 2026

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters would like to offer the following comments for the Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs.

The notice for this meeting is pretty short, with a very short comment period. We also find the agenda items as rather broad and would appreciate the opportunity to comment on any changes to current process.

- Agenda item 2 covers proposal submission rules. Any proposal should meet the criteria of changing an existing regulation, or creating a new one. Our assumption is that requiring the use of the standard form allows for easier collection and classifying of proposals, which can be quite numerous. We do feel the board should encourage proposers to use ADFG staff resources in wording and information on the subject. The board should also encourage that proposers take their proposal to their local AC before it is submitted for feedback on their local level. We think this would make for better, more concise proposals.
- Item 3, a review of Traditional Knowledge after three years, we will leave to the board to decide on whether this is helpful. We recognize that this is generally anecdotal information, rather than scientific. Any decisions the board makes should be based on sound science, with considerations for economics, recreation, and subsistence, but not necessarily in that order.
- Item 4 In our opinion, any production related hatchery proposal should be rejected. It's been said many times that hatchery production is permitted by the commissioner of ADFG alone. Unless something has changed statutorily, we believe this is still the case. We are also opposed to any hatchery proposals of any other type being submitted out of cycle as an Agenda Change Request.
- Item 5- Should a SOC be designated at an October work session for a November/early December meeting, it would leave the public little time to weigh in. In the past, the department has often taken draconian conservation measures in advance of SOC

designation, and those measures often are a large part of any Action Plan. Action Plans take a lot of ADFG staff time, and certain times of the year are extremely busy. I would defer to the department on this on a case-by-case basis, to assess their ability to produce Action Plan options in the time designated. Our take on out-of-cycle SOC designations as Agenda Change Requests is that if you accept them for designation as a SOC, then you should also accept them for delisting. If the board as a matter of policy decides they will just delist in cycle, we would not have a problem if the board were to give the department leeway to step outside the adopted Action Plan if the SOC delisting criteria, 3 consecutive years, or 4 of 6 years escapement had been met, prior to the regions cycle. We have a lot of confidence in our managers not giving us fishing time if there is a concern.

- Item 6- Public input- We find the Committee of the Whole to be a valuable part of the meeting process. We do feel it was better when we had microphones floating around the room, where you raised your hand to speak, if chosen on a particular proposal. The podium and lining up thing is workable, but has taken out the back and forth. Some of the best and most enlightening discussions I've seen were in this format. It usually remained pretty civil in my experience. Record Copies that change language for any proposal should be subject to public comment, at least as Record Copies, before there is a vote to adopt any proposal. We realize this could extend a meeting, but the public should be able to weigh in on any drastic changes to any proposal.

Again, we appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Max Worhatch', with a stylized, cursive script.

Max Worhatch, Executive Director

September 2026

Re: Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs Meeting

Chair Märit Carlson-Van Dort and Committee Members Carpenter and Wood:

On behalf of the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC), we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Alaska Board of Fisheries Committee on Board Process, Management, and Research Needs.

The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (YRITFC) is a tribal consortium representing member Tribal Governments and First Nations united in protecting the health and well-being of our tribal members, our future generations, and all Alaskans and Canadians who rely upon the health of the Yukon River and the fish.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG) Board of Fisheries (BOF) processes TEK Protocols, identified by Policy 2024-305-FB, recognize that additional public process opportunities are needed for all forms and types of knowledge to be shared and identified by members of the public, adding context and resolution to the BOF proposal decision-making process. Since the adoption of the TEK protocols, they have been utilized by YRITFC members, commissioners, and elected tribal leaders to add their expert traditional and local knowledge about impacts, what is happening on the ground, and, quite often, a historical context that can only be observed over years, often decades, of living in relation to and stewardship of place directly impacted by regulatory decision-making.

Currently, members of the public have a few options to engage in the public process and add context to decision-making, such as serving as an Advisory Committee (AC) member, providing public testimony at BOF regulatory meetings, and working directly with ADFG to draft a BOF proposal that changes regulation. These processes take significant time, energy, and quite often money. A recognized issue in BOF regulatory processes has always been the format and how we build public participation and engagement with our Elders and traditional knowledge holders. At times, the BOF format makes it difficult for our Elders to share lifetime context in a three-minute testimony, especially when members of the public have traveled for days, spent personal funds, and quite often lived a lifetime directly tied to our lands and waters. Allowing 10 minutes at the front end of the discussion gives more time to develop the science behind our traditional thought, share observations in a cultural manner, and add significant context to ADFG reports that are generally snapshots in time and place. Our Elders, our providers, and expert knowledge holders must take complex topics and weave that rationale into how a single change in regulation, a change in access, or unforeseen impacts has affected our ability to provide, share, and steward our lands.

The TEK Protocols support and expand the public process by creating opportunities to add our stories, observations, and understanding of place in context. The BOF process engages the public, makes decisions transparently, and encourages collaboration. Many forms of traditional

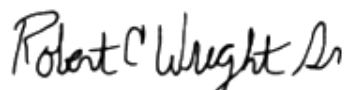
knowledge are relational, deeply connected to place, and inherently tied to governance. Our traditional knowledge is a way for members of the public to share how a change in regulation will impact our lives, why a change is needed, and our stories are built on a lifetime of sharing, collaborating, and providing for those most in need.

“We’ve been stewarding this land for thousands of years. The communities on the Yukon River are ready to continue this practice going forward.” Charlie Wright of Tanana and Rampart, TEK Report at the 2025 Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Board of Fisheries.

“The Traditional Knowledge was incorporated into all aspects of our lives, in regards to salmon-learning at an early age to utilize whole salmon in song sharing and not to waste. The salmon was treated as a living resource essential to survival, and treated with high regards and respect. The stewardship, or management, of the resource was initially a relationship with the resource.” Stanley Pete of Nunam Iqua, TEK Report at the 2025 Arctic Yukon Kuskokwim Board of Fisheries.

When decisions directly impact our ability to live our lives, subsist, or access resources, members of the public always need more opportunities and access within the decision-making process. The decisions our board members are tasked with making often significantly affect our abilities to live our traditional ways of life, subsist, provide, and, most importantly, share. ResponseIn Alaska, we ask members of the public, who may have never set foot on the land, to make allocative decisions that may prioritize customary and traditional subsistence uses over all other forms of access. Our Elders and traditional knowledge holders are often users of every sector under ADFG BOF governance and have seen a lifetime of change. When doing our due diligence, maintaining opportunities for members of the public, time, and access must always take precedence.

Sincerely,



Charlie Wright Sr.
YRITFC Chair