



October 13, 2017

Alaska Board of Fisheries
AK Dept. of Fish & Game
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811

RC 027

Chair John Jensen Reed Moriskey Orville Huntington
Alan Cain Israel Payton Robert Ruffner Fritz Johnson

Dear Alaska Board of Fisheries Members,

As the second largest community in Alaska—with 102,598 residents—the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and cities of Wasilla, Palmer, and Houston urge you to hold the 2020 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish regulatory meeting here in the Mat-Su.

We would be honored to host this important two-week event. It would be the first time ever that the regular meeting was held here, and long overdue given that the Mat-Su has been the fastest growing region in the state for decades.

Vast Access

More than 150,000 sport anglers and 35,000 personal use households fish for salmon in Upper Cook Inlet. The majority of these stakeholders live in the Mat-Su and Anchorage.

By locating the 2020 meeting here you would be providing access for a great many residents and would be reducing the economic impact on stakeholder travel that otherwise would occur if the meeting were located beyond Anchorage in Kenai.

Oftentimes financial interest is a driving factor in whether an Alaskan will participate in a lengthy, complex meeting such as the Fisheries Board meeting. It is more likely that a higher percentage of Alaskans with a commercial interest will attend a far away meeting than the recreation fisherman with merely a license in his/her pocket. Many residents and businesses of the Mat-Su Borough participate in, depend on, and are affected by regulations made by the Board of Fisheries.

Sustainability in the Mat-Su Basin-the Issue of the Decade

The restoration efforts for salmon sustainability are ongoing in the Mat-Su. It makes sense that Alaska's highest fisheries regulating board should meet at the headwaters where much of the salmon stock begins for Upper Cook Inlet. Mat-Su rivers historically have supported the largest runs of chinook, coho, pinks, and chums and yet the Basin has eight of the state's 14 stocks of concern. While coho and sockeye escapements were met this year, in years prior to the

implementation of a Conservation Corridor in Upper Cook Inlet, escapement goals had met chronic failure. Holding a meeting in the Mat-Su will help the Fisheries Board make informed decisions on these complex, mixed-stocked fisheries. A Board of Fisheries work session in 1996 was the first and last regulatory fisheries meeting held in the Mat-Su.

Reducing State Costs

As the four Mayors of the region, we pledge to reduce the cost for the State to hold its Fisheries Board meeting in a Mat-Su location.

- The Mat-Su Borough offers its IT support for audio live streaming and logistics. The Mat-Su Borough IT Department is a statewide leader in the Smart Community efforts of creating inclusive applications that connect stakeholders to information.
- The Mat-Su Borough is receptive to facilitating copier needs.
- The Mat-Su Borough will request a shuttle service between hotels and the meeting place if desired.
- The City of Wasilla welcomes the meeting on the 19,000-square-foot turf arena of the Curtis D. Menard Memorial Sports Center. The facility also has three meeting rooms with moveable walls totaling 1,900 square feet. Wasilla agrees to pay for coffee and morning snacks. Additionally, a 3,500-square foot commercial kitchen is on site for a caterer. Dedicated internet lines are available. Plenty of free parking is available.
- The Wasilla Mayor offers a free radio ad for two weeks prior to the meeting.
- Hotel rooms for more than 170 visitors are nearby
- Anchorage International Airport is an hour away. The Palmer and Wasilla Airports can support small commuter, multi-engine aircraft.
- The Mat-Su Regional Medical Center is within 9 miles from the Menard Center.

For this preponderance of benefits and issues, the Mat-Su-Wasilla location would be an ideal meeting site for the 2020 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting. We respectfully thank you for considering this venue.

Sincerely,



Edna DeVries
Mayor, City of Palmer



Bert Cottle
Mayor, City of Wasilla



Virgie Thompson
Mayor, City of Houston



Vern Halter
Mayor, Matanuska-Susitna Borough