

October 8, 2023

To: Alaska Board of Fisheries

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Chairperson Marit Carlson-Van Dort

The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association (KPFA), since 1954, has been a recognized 501 (c) trade organization that represents the interests of Cook Inlet Salmon Setnet Fishermen (SO4H). Approximately 84% of the Limited Entry Permit holders are Alaska residents and a predominate portion of these fishing families reside on the Kenai Peninsula, have fishing sites and homes within the East Side Set Net (ESSN) area of Upper Cook Inlet (UCI).

***Our last Board of Directors meeting held on October 8, 2023, affirmed unanimously to support a request to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BOF) to reconsider the location of the UCI Regulatory meeting, currently scheduled for February 23 – March 7, 2023 in Anchorage, to move the location to the Kenai/Soldotna area.***

We understand that the BOF has set the current time and location at a previous meeting but wish to remind the board that these decisions were decided upon at meetings where public attendance may have been restricted due to COVID concerns. We are also aware that memorandums such as one dated 01.15.2021, set a precedence on changing meeting dates to address complications and adapted the agenda to accommodate testifiers.

We are recommending that the board take up within this October 12-13, 2023 Worksession agenda, a discussion and take action that would assist the public in hearing their testimony. This would allow stakeholders to have a meaningful participation in the regulatory process which greatly affects their lives.

The board should be aware that the '*the cost to participate*' is extremely burdensome to Kenai Peninsula fishers. Particularly in light of '*state and federally declared fishery disasters*' for the; 2018, 2020, 2021, 2022 and the probability of 2023 fishing seasons. Not only does the current dates conflict with the *Iditarod & Fur Rondy* event in Anchorage, but the costs; travel, meals and accommodations has tremendously increased. A simple conservative estimate of \$200 - \$300 per day for the 14 days of the meeting would amount to \$2,800 - \$4,200.

The Kenai Peninsula Borough and the City of Kenai have recently heard a public request to convene the meeting in the local Kenai/Soldotna area. They expressed a desire to work cooperatively with the BOF in securing the necessary facilities and accommodations to accomplish the task.

The board directors of KPFA are here to assist with any questions the BOF and Board Support may have.

With all regards,

The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association Board of Director's

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