



January 17, 2019

Glenn Haight, Executive Director  
 Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
 Boards Support Section  
 P.O. Box 115526  
 Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Glenn,

The Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association strongly encourages the Alaska Board of Fisheries to hold fast on its vote to hold the 2020 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meetings on the Kenai Peninsula. The Kenai Peninsula is home to the streams and rivers that nurture the great salmon runs of upper Cook Inlet and to the majority of the people who make their livings harvesting, processing, and otherwise capitalizing on these vital fish. Finfish meetings have not been hosted on the Kenai Peninsula for more than 20 years. The men and women represented by KPFA feel that a Kenai Peninsula meeting will give local fishing groups, businesses as well as commercial and private fishers the opportunity to take part in this important public process.

As the organization that represents more than 750 limited entry permit holders and over 500 individual family businesses that operate on the Kenai Peninsula, we feel that a meeting here is long overdue. These meetings affect all of our members as well as the thousands of people who are directly and indirectly touched by the Peninsula's salmon-driven economy. It's only right that the meeting be held where the majority of these fisheries take place and within reach of the Alaskans who are impacted the most by the decisions made by the Board of Fish.

Seven full board cycles—21 years—have passed since the Kenai Peninsula has hosted the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish Meeting. Here are a few of the reasons that we feel it is imperative that they be held here for the 2020 board cycle:

- Citizens of the City of Kenai and the community of Kasilof, who are directly impacted by the tens of thousands of personal use fishers who descend on their communities each summer to harvest salmon, have had few opportunities to give input on management of those fisheries because the meetings are now held exclusively in Anchorage.

- The majority of the sportfishing activities in Upper Cook Inlet occur on the Kenai Peninsula, yet Peninsula residents have repeatedly had limited access to the Board of Fisheries process which grows more and more anchored to Anchorage.
- By holding the meetings far from those who best know the fisheries, and because attending a two-week meeting in Anchorage is cost-prohibitive, the tremendous resource of local and traditional knowledge regarding the 130-year-old commercial salmon fisheries has all but disappeared from the Board of Fish process.
- For those same reasons, the local and traditional knowledge regarding centuries-old subsistence fisheries has all but disappeared from the Board of Fish process.
- Peninsula businesses that prosper from, and support the commercial, sport and subsistence lifestyles throughout the year would benefit from taking part the deliberations made at these meetings.
- If the meeting is held on the Kenai Peninsula, local businesses including hotels, restaurants, B & B's, retail stores, and gas stations among others, will benefit from the winter boost in revenue during an otherwise slow time of year.
- The Kenai Peninsula is home to the many of Upper Cook Inlet's Fish and Game Advisory Committees, Aquaculture, Conservation and Fishing associations and their participation will be enhanced.
- The Kenai and Kasilof rivers run through the Kenai Peninsula Borough and thus all of the sport, personal use and subsistence fisheries supported by those rivers occur within the borough.
- The entire East Side Setnet fishery is conducted within the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- The entire Drift Fishery is conducted in the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- All Personal Use Fisheries on the Kenai Peninsula occur within the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- Virtually all Upper Cook Inlet Saltwater Sport Fisheries are conducted within the Kenai Peninsula Borough.
- The Kenai Peninsula Borough has 44 schools with 8950 students who would benefit from the experience of attending a Board of Fisheries meeting in or near their own hometowns.

For these reasons and many more, the Board of Directors of the Kenai Peninsula Fisherman's Association strongly urges the Alaska Board of Fisheries to hold its 2020 Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meetings on the Kenai Peninsula.

For more than two decades the people of the Kenai Peninsula have been marginalized, excluded from the Board of Fish process by distance, cost, and inconvenience, please don't let that continue.

Respectfully



Andy Hall, President  
Kenai Peninsula Fishermen's Association