



Kenai Peninsula Borough

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Peter A. Micciche
Borough Mayor

October 12, 2023

Submitted via Email:

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Art Nelson, Executive Director of the Alaska Board of Fisheries
And Members of the Alaska Board of Fisheries

We strongly urge the Alaska Board of Fisheries (BoF) to change the venue for their upcoming Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting, February 23 to March 7th meeting to the Kenai Peninsula. Multiple, identical requests have been made in the past by additional entities in our communities. We are united in our resolve that stakeholders from the peninsula be treated with fairness and equity.

The Board of Fisheries UCI meeting has not been held on the Kenai Peninsula in 24 years. This request is not unreasonable, especially considering the traumatic impact of closing the East Side Set Net Fishery and restrictions to sport fishing this summer. When more than eighty percent of the decisions made during BoF Cook Inlet Finfish meetings affect watersheds on the Kenai Peninsula, it is reasonable to make the meetings more accessible to affected residents by including the Kenai Peninsula in the meeting rotation. Not only is holding the meeting on the Kenai Peninsula essential to stakeholders here but also to board members themselves who can greatly benefit by hearing from engaged Alaskans from all user groups. It is time to give residents of the Kenai Peninsula a fair opportunity to attend and participate in the BoF process in person.

With the increased cost of lodging and meals, attending in person is prohibitively expensive for many to spend two weeks away from their homes and jobs. They should be accommodated with the same opportunities to participate and testify in person as other interested parties in a rotating location. Decisions by the BoF affect virtually every resident of the Kenai Peninsula either directly or indirectly. Our local economies depend on our fisheries. This is especially important when, as is the case of residents of the Kenai Peninsula, constituents and stakeholders hold vast local knowledge of fisheries that are a great resource to the BoF.

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TO: Alaska Board of Fisheries

Considering what is at stake for many here on the Kenai Peninsula when it comes to the management of fisheries and other actions taken by the BoF, holding the meeting on the Kenai Peninsula this cycle is not only reasonable but necessary for building the level of trust necessary to work together on solving the serious challenges ahead of all of us. The Kenai Peninsula Borough government values our constituents and seeks their input continuously. That participation by residents is essential to good governance. We expect nothing less from the BoF. The Alaska Board of Fisheries is strongly urged to schedule the Upper Cook Inlet Finfish meeting of 2024 on the Kenai Peninsula and hereafter be added to the rotation of meetings. At the very least, please consider splitting the location of this meeting to include a partial meeting on the Kenai.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Peter A. Micciche
Borough Mayor



Brent Johnson
Assembly President