

ALASKA BOARD OF FISHERIES
POLICY STATEMENT

Policy for Formation and Role of Committees at Board Meetings

#2000-199-FB

INTRODUCTION

During the past three (3) years, in response to its workload and in a desire to increase public participation, the Board has employed a committee process during the course of its meetings throughout the state of Alaska. This committee process has changed and developed over these three years in response public and department comments and the experiences of the Board in using the committee process.

It is expected that this process will continue to evolve as the needs of the public, the Board and the Department continue to evolve. As such, the committee process is meant to be dynamic and flexible. However, despite the expected future refinements, now that the committee process has been through a three-year Board cycle, it is appropriate for the Board to consider formal adoption of a Policy Statement on the Board committee process.

The Board recognizes that the public relies on the predictability of the regulatory process. The purpose of adopting this Policy Statement and the attached description of the committee process is to place the committee process in the records of the Board. Thus, the adoption of this Policy Statement will define the purpose, the formation and the role of Board committees. Over time, all participants in the Board process can be knowledgeable and effective participants before the Board of Fisheries.

DISCUSSION

A major strength of the Board committee process lies in its broad-based public participation format. To accommodate greater levels of public involvement, to enable the Board to receive and utilize the volume of information presented to it and to effectively handle the increased number of proposals seeking regulatory changes, the Board has found it desirable to create internal Board committees. The Board has found that these committees allow the Board to complete its work timely and effectively, with full consideration of the content and purpose of the many proposals before it each year.

The Board considers the use of committees as an expansion of its traditional processes; not as a replacement for such long-standing information gathering activities as staff and advisory committee reports, public testimony, written comments or informal contacts between Board members and the public. The Board committees are intended to enhance the process, not become a substitute for existing process.

While the committee process, of necessity, involves less than the full Board, nothing about the committee process is intended to, or has the consequence of, replacing the judgment of the full Board on all proposals before it at any regulatory meeting. The Board has taken steps to insure that its committees do not dictate/direct the outcome of any vote on any proposal. These steps include limiting participation by Board members to less than the number of Board members necessary to determine the outcome of the vote on any proposal. In addition, Board committees avoid predetermining the outcome by organizing the written materials presented to the Board so that they are readily available for review by the full Board, by presenting detailed reports on the committee's work and by fostering and encouraging debate during the deliberative process.

The goals and purposes of the Board committee process include but are not limited to the following:

1. Acquisition of additional detailed information from both the public and staff.
2. Providing a consensus-building forum that assists in the understanding and resolution of complex and controversial conservation, allocation, fishery resource, habitat and management issues.
3. Enhancing the interaction among the Board, the public and department staff which results in broader public understanding of the regulatory decisions of the Board and the Department's management of the fisheries.
4. Promoting efficient use of time by organizing and grouping similar proposals, reducing redundancy and organizing the huge volume of written materials provided before and during meetings by the department and the public.
5. Insuring completion of the Board's work within fiscal and temporal constraints.

The Board now finds as follows:

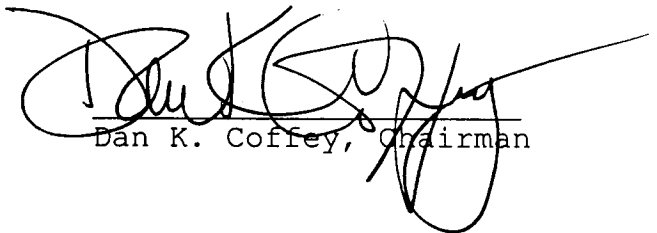
1. The goals and objectives are appropriate;
2. The statements of fact accurately reflect the beliefs and opinions of the Board as to the matters stated;
3. The committee process has, over a full three-year cycle of the Board, resulted in the goals and objectives having consistently been met.

Based on the findings, the Board of Fisheries resolves as follows:

1. The Policy Statement is hereby adopted as the policy of the Board of Fisheries.
2. The description of the committee process attached to this Policy Statement will be followed, in most circumstances, by the Board during the course of its regulatory meetings, subject always to the exceptional circumstance as determined by the Board.
3. The committee process is intended to be dynamic and flexible to meet the needs of the public, the Board and the Department. Thus, this Policy Statement and the attached description of the committee process are subject to ongoing review and amendment by the Board.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska this 23rd day of March, 2000.

Vote
(Miller Absent)



Dan K. Coffey, Chairman