



While we are hopeful the board will be able to conduct business as usual this meeting cycle, if we find the COVID-19 environment does not improve by the January 2021 Work Session, or if there is improvement but not enough to adequately ensure the boards, staff, and public safety, the department will recommend further postponement of both regulatory meetings to the following meeting cycle. If that occurs, the board will still need to meet via web-conference to act on those proposals that provide annual reauthorizations for antlerless moose hunts and brown bear tag fee exemptions. The department will also evaluate and recommend if there any proposals with critical biological and conservation issues that may require board action in addition to the reauthorization proposals.

In discussions regarding the question of in-person meetings, we recommend the board consider several factors. We feel the two most important are safety for all participants, and the ability of the public to be able to attend freely. In addition, the department would incur additional expenses associated with in-person meetings for providing health safeguards, such as sneeze guards, hand sanitizer, signage, thermometers, and face coverings for state-covered attendees. If any pre-testing for COVID-19 is required for participant attendance, the department would need to pay for board and advisory committee members, and staff. The most significant cost would be the potential of a COVID-19 outbreak among attendees and the costs associated with quarantining in the host community. If forced to quarantine for 10 to 14 days outside of one's home community, the cost per person may approach \$3,000 in hotel, per diem, and incidental expenses. If an outbreak occurs which removes key personnel, it is difficult to conceive the meetings will continue as planned.

We would also anticipate Boards Support needing to make several adjustments for the meeting venue and format which may prove to be challenging, such as:

- Requiring all personnel and public to wear protective face gear.
- Requiring participant registration for COVID-19 contact tracing and to ensure any mandated capacities are not exceeded.
- Increasing the spacing for board members and staff seated at the table to at least six feet between participants.
- Arranging the audience seating so that individuals are sitting at least six feet from each other, except for members of the same household. This may necessitate limiting the number of people who can attend in person.
- Eliminating or minimizing coffee and water service to avoid unnecessary touchpoints.
- Ensuring placement and maintenance of hand sanitizer dispensers and signage throughout the meeting venue.
- Requiring separate entrance and exit doors for the meeting room.
- Equipping the "record copy" desk with a stand-up sneeze guard and positioning it so that the public is at least six feet away from staff at the table. There would need to be floor signage providing adequate distance for the desk queue.

- Eliminating physical paper material for the board and staff, to reduce touchpoints. Instead, all meeting material including from the public, will need to be received electronically. All material would be posted to the website meeting page and all board members would need to use laptops to view the material.
- Using projectors and screens throughout the room may be necessary for material to be posted for greater visibility.
- Thoroughly and regularly cleaning all areas of frequent contact, such as microphones, testimony table and chairs, and water coolers each day prior to the meeting and over the lunch hour.

Boards Support would need to work closely with the meeting venue personnel to ensure these types of mitigation measures can be accommodated at the meeting spaces.

To assist with the board with any decisions related to meeting dates and locations, the websites below provide the current health alert status information for the state and the host communities. In addition, enclosed for the board's review is a summary of the public survey results for holding Board of Fisheries and Board of Game meetings in light of COVID-19.

<https://coronavirus-response-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com/>

<https://matanuska-susitna-borough-coronavirus-covid-19-msb.hub.arcgis.com/>

<https://interior-alaska-covid19-hub-tomdgis.hub.arcgis.com/>

# MEMORANDUM

# STATE OF ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME Boards Support Section

TO: Alaska Board of Fisheries

DATE: September 2, 2020

THRU:

PHONE: 907-465-6095

FROM: Glenn Haight, Executive Director  
Alaska Board of Fisheries

SUBJECT: Public Survey Results re:  
Board Meetings in light of  
COVID-19

## Introduction

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) issued a public survey and solicited written comments from July 22 through August 31, 2020 to seek input on the Board of Fisheries and Board of Game's 2020/2021 meeting cycle in light of COVID-19. During this time there were 234 respondents to the survey. Most completed the survey. Written comments are provided separately on the board's meeting page.

Given some of the questions related to health concerns, the survey did not look to closely identify individuals including whether or not they were staff with ADF&G. Through a review of the respondents Internet Protocol (IP) code, 26 survey respondents were identified as State of Alaska employees. These responses are captured in the Staff Feedback section of the meeting material. The survey results in this document are from the remaining 208 respondents.

### 1. What Board are you most interested in?

Board	Count	Percentage
Board of Fisheries	117	56%
Board of Game	16	8%
Both	75	36%

### 2. Have you attended a board meeting in the past?

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	163	78%
No	45	22%
Total	215	

**If yes to #2 - based on your experience attending board meetings, would you attend one without COVID-19 mitigation measures?**

Response	Count	Percentage
Yes	36	22.4%
No	105	65.2%
Maybe	20	12.4%
Total	167	

**3. What is your level of concern regarding contracting COVID-19? (0 no concern - 10 extremely concerned) (0=Lowest Concern, 10=Highest Concern)**

Of the 197 that answered, the average was 6.61.

**4. Respondents indicated employing the following mitigation measures in their normal activities.**

	Out of 205	
Wearing a mask in public	169	80%
Practicing social distancing to the greatest extent possible	175	83%
Washing my hands frequently	176	83%
Avoiding large gatherings	158	75%
Seeking regular COVID-19 testing	26	12%
Hunkering down in the home as much as possible	111	53%
None at all	7	3%

**Open ended responses to Q4 when asked what “other” mitigation measures the respondents employed:**

- *Living alone on a fishing boat*
- *This epidemic has been blown way out of proportion. It hasn't done anything that they said it was supposed to do. This state needs to get back to work and life.*
- *FALSE SCIENCE IS HARD TO FOLLOW TRUSTINGLY.*
- *educate others*
- *follow cover updates for my community*
- *Following the ever changing science and the case counts to make informed decisions.*
- *Have heart condition. Have been tested for Covid19*
- *Keeping my boat and crew out of port*
- *not attending meetings and crowded areas*
- *try to stay clear of the mass of out of state charter clients brought in by the several lodges in town are bringing in every day!*
- *I was social distancing before social distancing was cool*
- *use of hand sanitizer during and when leaving public places*
- *Tested every 2 weeks for shore based employment*
- *Prayer*

- *Social Distancing as in not shaking hands, I'll wear a mask if required or if others request it*
- *Fishing*
- *I have not taken a crew member outside of immediate family this year. I have not traveled to other ports. When selling fish I do not leave my boat.*
- *Been tested 3 times*
- *Air travel is out of the question. Much too dangerous.*
- *Wear a mask while indoors and closer than six feet to others for greater than ten min*
- *Virtually keeping in touch with family and close friends via phone*
- *Avoiding people who do not wear masks or purposely interfere with you social distancing*
- *Documenting all contacts my wife and I have and level of safety measures in the interaction.*
- *Avoid close interaction with people who have recently traveled; not dine with people who are not in my bubble*

**5. If current COVID-19 related conditions remain the same or worsen do you believe the board should:**

	Yes	%	No	%	Maybe	%	Total responses
Hold in-person meetings?	41	21%	126	65%	28	14%	195
Hold virtual & teleconferenced meetings?	91	47%	52	27%	49	26%	192
Postpone meetings until conditions allow?	71	38%	87	46%	31	16%	189

Other (please specify)

- *I've attended State of Alaska teleconference meetings and people's voices are not always heard*
- *I do not believe it is safe for the Board of Fisheries to hold in person meetings this year. There is no possible way to hold these meetings online and follow an open public process, without potential interference to deliberations, and a virtual meeting leaves many questions regarding ethics.*
- *In my opinion, perhaps limiting participation by the public to a certain amount of people, with spacing provided seating, masking, hand sanitizer, etc. it should be just fine. And as some delegations do, use their own conference rooms- the same situation can be set up in other rooms where the meeting is held.*
- *i think after the state has a 60 day decline in cases, a in person meeting would be safe*
- *we need to conduct business but we also need to protect all involved.*
- *New board members cannot vote until legislators approve them*
- *Good call in technology with a live broadcast*
- *Next year*
- *Get back to normal operations and offer ways for those who are concerned or at risk a way to attend meetings.*
- **TRY TO LISTEN TO THE NON LOBBY CITIZENS WITH CONCERNS. WE ARE THE SILENT MAJORITY TYPE**
- *Online meetings can allow testimony and feedback and can post all needed information on the internet. In person meetings, if community spread has been reduced to the green level, can be conducted with mask and distancing requirements.*

- *Other than emergency actions, the regular cycle should be set off by one year. Emergency actions could be taken up with a virtual meeting.*
- *Hold meetings via teleconference or postpone meetings, because many ABOF or ABOG I have attended are people that are high risk of getting COVID-19. Many are people at least 62 years or older. SOA Fish & Game Commissioner should consider this and take it seriously. He may be needlessly endangering their lives.*
- *If one Alaska public school has students attending, then the board can meet safely.*
- *You should consult each building admin and maintenance people about proper ventilation, filter changes, air cleaners.. Look up the CDC guidelines for public gatherings or opening offices especially concerning ventilation... If you are really scientists do the work.. If you are administrators listen to your scientists..*
- *As we know there is a strong tendency to discuss topics socially at the meetings. While the board and testimony could most probably be done safely the associated conversations could be uncomfortable for me if people aren't social distancing properly or wearing masks. The main factor Tomco solder is where are we as a community and state in terms of spread when the meetings come around as well as where are we in terms of potential treatments. A virtual meeting would work fine under the circumstances.*
- *The whole system of input has been compromised by the pandemic by limiting meeting in advisory groups and general public discussions. The state of Alaska has not helped with there less than effective ways of preventing the spread of the virus.*
- *My recommendation would be to postpone the meeting cycle by one full year.*
- *Covid is a scare tactic for weak and misinformed individuals who can't or don't think for themselves. they hope to control people thru these tactics and it's sure not right. They're also trying to take away our rights as US citizens by trying to force you to do things that are bad for you. Worse then this so called covid.*
- *Do both in-person and remote at the same time. If people have concerns because they are in a higher risk category, they should be able to attend remotely. We need participation, and there should be a question/comment screener to keep the meeting moving. The town-hall meetings that our US Senators have held are a great model/format to follow Q&A.*
- *If the board holds meetings electronically then we will be silencing many of the Alaskans who are more at home in the woods and with conservation than in an electronic store. To silence the voices of the men and women who know the most about what's going on out there in their areas will be very detrimental to hunting for the future.*
- *Meetings with light agendas could be held via teleconference, or if COVID conditions allow the public to access video at local ADF&G offices held virtually. Meetings with lengthy agendas should wait until they can be safely conducted in person.*
- *Virtual zoom meetings are going to be our new reality for awhile and I am hoping that ADF&G can find a way to make that happen.*
- *Postpone meetings should only be postponed if we have large numbers of people are infected with COVID.*
- *Enact ALL sunset stipulations from last meeting cycle.*
- *A combination of all three options should be available. If the virus mutates and the situation worsens, then postponing should be considered. Meetings held in person should always be practiced as the Board and Department can be assured reasonable protection "behind the line". Implementing a zoom option would be considerate for those public members with personal safety*

*concern, however holding the entire meeting in virtual format would unfairly excluding rural participants and especially rural stakeholders who have poor or limited internet access at best.*

- *It would be nice to always have telephone and virtual attendance / participation at all meetings for the future. This is very important for equitable public participation.*
- *Require strict measures to be applied. Require limiting the number of participants and social distancing which would include department personnel and BOF members and staff. Require BOF members to not have conversations without the public being involved, no secret meetings!*
- *Many organization and agencies have held virtual meetings for large number of participants and members w/o issue, there no is no reason why the state isn't capable of doing the same for all Alaskans. Now is the tie to connect the public to BOG/F allowing equal access to testify on their key issues and to be part of the best public process.*
- *Hold virtual meetings for only emergency proposals or issues, or for sunset proposals or proposals that are time sensitive.*

**6. With mitigation measures in place, how likely are you to attend an in-person board meeting?**  
(0="Less likely", 10="More likely")

Of the 183 who answered, the average response was 4.75.

**7. As a follow up to Q6, respondents were asked which mitigation measures they would be in favor of:**

	Out of 197 respondents	
Practicing social distancing (remain 6 feet apart)	149	76%
Wearing a mask	157	80%
Providing all written comments electronically	113	57%
Taking a COVID-19 diagnostic test prior to attending a meeting	70	36%
Submitting to screening tests prior to entering the meeting	112	57%
Quarantining for 14 days if you contract COVID-19 while attending a board meeting	86	44%
Limiting attendance	75	38%

**Open ended responses to measures they would favor.**

- *I don't think you can trust people to actually quarantine prior and some won't have access to a test. Seems Testing and limiting attendance isn't doable due to limiting the public input/process*
- *I do not feel it is safe for the Board to meet, even with precautions in place.*
- *As I stated before, taking proactive measures to limit any potential spread.*
- *Oy problem with controversial proposals is there wouldnt be a lot getting dont. Board generated is worst and no public input. Board and ADF/G huddle up behind the line and the local AC's are left out of the loop. Might look at only AC rep's and ADF/G people to attend board meetings. There could be a spot in the back of room for public and their temperature would have to be taken prior to entering the room. Some type of limited questionnaire maybe has to cough for sickness there fever or any of that type stuff filled out so if anybody did get it there would be a*

*way to contact everybody that was in the room at that point to let them know that they were possibly susceptible to catching it*

- *No meeting*
- *I would like to see life return to normal and stop blowing this virus out of proportion. More people died in 2018 from the flu than they have from the Cold virus that is circulating. Are you going to shut everything down for the flu season.*
- *TOWN HALL TELECONFERENCE*
- *Remote video conference the entire meeting with full public access to all non-executive session presentations and discussions. Emphasize/prioritize/require written submission of presentations and comments.*
- *Possible limits on room crowding, with the ability to watch on closed circuit TV from adjacent rooms if crowding is exceeded.*
- *we should be able to voice our concerns as clearly as possible, and as safely as possible. Masks should be required. thank you*
- *I do not support an in-person meeting at all, regardless of suggested protective measures. Half of the people wouldn't comply and it would be a mess. Until we have anti-viral medications and/or an effective vaccine, we need to exercise extra caution, particular to protect those who are most vulnerable.*
- *Do a teleconference for ABOG and ABOF meetings. Many people that attend these meetings are 60+ years or older. They are considered high risk of getting COVID-19. Many people may want to attend meetings at the risk of their lives, because it is important to them to testify and be in person at these meetings. ADFG should do what is necessary to keep the public safe from COVID-19.*
- *All attendees who travel into Cordova for the board meeting must have a mandatory covid 19 rapid test. That means; show up early, get tested, isolate until results, then use all PPE to safely run the meeting.*
- *Limiting attendance is a good idea from a public health standpoint but I worry that it would significantly curtail public input and unwisely limit the perspectives that the Board hears.*
- *Make sure there is proper ventilation/fresh air/clean filters*
- *It is an imposition to put everyone's health and safety at risk. You really should postpone for a year. It's not worth the risk.*
- *Limiting attendance should not be done as a last resort. Everyone has a right to the process.*
- *Postpone meeting*
- *Problem with limiting attendance this limits opinions which is the main process of BOF*
- *The public process of BOF is so important for the equal opportunity of all Alaskans. COVID-19 mitigation measures are extremely important, but I do think the full public meeting room and ability to talk with board members on breaks is extremely important for the Board Process. I think it is best the full cycle is delayed a year rather than taking extreme/costly measures to prevent the spread of the disease.*
- *Not a darn thing. If people are so brainwashed they can stay home or submit comments another way.*
- *Having been to several bof meetings the public interaction is essential to the process having a meeting with covid still happening would handicap a lot of attendees it is my opinion that bof should be postponed till a later safer date Kenneth mcgee*
- *Let's get Alaska moving forward again. No fear*
- *Limited in-person based on room capacity, with the remote call-in option*

- *The meetings should be postponed. The Board of Fish requires physical presence to be effective. I submit written comments, but they are never enough. Some of the issues, especially allocation require face to face interaction with both the Board and all concerned parties. Peoples livelihoods depend on the personal interaction and excluding folks will diminish the fairness and functionality of the meetings.*
- *Meetings need to be held virtually. The NPFMC has done it successfully.*
- *NO public meetings... far too risky.. In order to be fair, meetings must have equal access for participants. Travel to a board meeting and attendance for the duration in closed meeting rooms is far too dangerous at the moment.*
- *If the board requires masks or any of this nonsense then the people who will be of most benefit will refuse to go and that will be a detriment to hunting and angling across the state.*
- *Unless the COVID-19 situation improves significantly, **\*\*all\*\*** meeting business (not just public comment) should be submitted and available electronically.*
- *Temperature gunning all participants, every day entering the venue. Require proper masks and proper masking techniques (cover nose and mouth). Limit participation of committee of the whole to those who have signed up and/or have previously submitted comments or the actual proposal. Covid tests and screening currently are only good so far as the day they were taken, it doesn't account for if you have been exposed since then, so are meaningless in this and most situations.*
- *Delaying meetings until COVID concerns reduced.*
- *Allow participation without being physically present. This should always be an option!*
- *None*
- *wait to hold meeting*
- *Virtual meeting*
- *Be sensible and demand that all attendees comply with recommendations.*
- *none of these measures can protect anyone who needs to travel to a meeting via aircraft*
- *transfer to virtual and telephonic participation simultaneously*
- *plexiglass dividers for staff and adequate airflow in the room.*
- *Provide call-in option for public testimonies*
- *Rotate testifiers through to maintain social distancing; contact tracing*

**8. An in-person meeting may require limits to the number of people who may attend and involve preregistration. Is this acceptable?**

	Count	Percentage
Yes	63	36%
No	76	44%
Maybe	31	18%
No opinion	4	2%
Total responses	179	

Other (please specify)

- *Need virtual option in addition to physical*
- *Yes, however fair representation between delegations must be allowed.*

- *Virtual*
- *Limiting public involvement at any level of the process could be interpreted as a disregard for public opinion. I believe it would be best to limit meetings to board members and staff only, allowing the public to participate online or by phone. This will place a uniform opportunity for members of the public to participate, but may unfortunately limit the ability for those in remote areas without internet/phone to participate.*
- *Yes, as long as arrangements are made to accommodate those left behind. In addition, if a person wants to testify in person, even if they cannot be in the room to listen, they should be able to be in the room to testify.*
- *Have registered public members take a COVID-19 test before attending ABOF or ABOG meetings in person. Really should not do this. Public will complain that their voice or concerns were not heard, since they would not be in attendance at the ABOF OR ABOG meetings. Is this legal to allow limited public to attend?*
- *I think pre-registration is fine. I worry that limits on the number of people attending may mean that certain perspectives will be eliminated from the meeting.*
- *On line meetings would solve the problem*
- *I like the face-to-face BoF meetings but one shouldn't have to risk serious illness to participate.*
- *These public meeting designed To be as inclusive as possible. The last vestige of democracy in our country*
- *Same as above, BOF is about having an open forum for everyone and anyone to voice their thoughts and concerns*
- *As I said above, excluding people will diminish the ability of public input process. Allowing all the people that want to attend, will most likely result in COVID transmission due to the intense contagiousness of the disease.*
- *Meetings need to be held virtually. The NPFMC has done it successfully.*
- *Again... NO public meetings are safe or fair at the moment. Board of Fish meetings are always crowded with stakeholders and agency people, as it should be. That can't happen right now*
- *A meeting at this time will cause too much Unnecessary exposure for staff even if public is restricted.*
- *No, limiting attendance would exacerbate the gulf of influence between those with financial interests and the non-financially involved general public. The meeting should be postponed if the only alternative is to limit attendance.*
- *Opportunities for all who wish to attend should be made available through scheduled testimony times, one in one out policies, etc.*
- *Limiting attendance is dangerous territory to consider.*
- *All meetings should be conducted so those not physically present can participate!*
- *Not needed*
- *A virtual meeting provides best mitigation for anyone interested.*
- *don't think it would be fair on who would be selected to attend the meeting if it was limited*
- *It will create an equity issue*
- *This is the main reason I think we should not have in-person meetings especially in winter in Alaska, when the transition rate could be higher. Given the agendas there is too much public comment effectively via teleconference these meetings. For now BOG meetings should be limited to biological emergencies only.*
- *limited and selecting user groups is much like breaking state law, you can't favor one type of user group*

- *only If the meeting additionally provided on-line virtual board meeting with an option for taking testimony telephonically.*

**9. Do you oppose the boards holding virtual meetings over the Internet through platforms such as Zoom, in combination with the option for providing testimony telephonically?**

	Count	Percentage
Yes	82	41%
No	119	59%
Total responses	201	

**Open ended responses**

- *I don't think all comments would be heard. From the residents of the state*
- *Much of the BOF deliberative process involves being able to talk with stakeholders and board members. That is lost with virtual meetings. It also makes the process less transparent as you have no idea who board members are talking to.*
- *It leaves open the potential for the board to receive additional texts, emails, papers, etc, during deliberations without any public oversight or via department of law. Unclear whether this format could even be a legal option for a public meeting of this scope and nature.*
- *the boards may not get the interaction that they get with in person meetings which is important*
- *There is little opportunity for collaborative work to craft compromises*
- *There is a lot that happens in the personal meetings that would not be possible on a virtual platform. Ie. Many times a board member will ask questions of certain groups during breaks in an effort to better understand the situation at hand.*
- *That is not a public meeting and limits public input.*
- *I don't want to stare at a computer for days. Thanks*
- *there is real value in personal interaction with Board members not only during the all too brief public testimony but also during breaks, evenings etc. this would be totally lost with virtual Zoom type meetings*
- *Board of Fish meeting make policy for three years and to limit the meeting to virtual the meeting would not have the same or proper give and take among user groups. the give and take and conversations given to settle disputes would not be available. so I strongly disagree with virtual meetings. I have commercial fished in PWS for over 30 years and the board of fish meeting are to important to all users.*
- *Potential technical difficulties having such a complex set of meetings held virtually.*
- *I think virtual meetings are an unfortunate necessity given the times*
- *The level of interaction is limited and the chance to reach compromise positions on issues is almost impossible. I don't see why any of the issues need to be addressed this year, unless it is deemed an emergency by the BOF.*
- *It is hard enough to get all of the information out and listen to testimony in an orderly fashion when the meetings are held in person. I just don't see how it could be done virtually.*
- *I am not opposed to meeting virtual if the State of Alaska takes the same precautions with all the public school kids. At this time, it looks like kids will be in schools. If this changes, then by all means, have a virtual meeting.*

- *I believe the risk of COVID-19 is minimal and worth the benefits of an in person meeting*
- *Internet is not working for people in the Bush to use it effectively.*
- *This modification to BoF meetings entirely changes the dynamic, the effectiveness and impedes the public process that you just raved about. Put it off a few months or a year!*
- *Different groups with opposing views need to caucus to achieve compromise. This is not possible at a virtual meeting. In addition many SEAK rural fishermen don't have access to good internet connections. Indeed many communities have no internet at all.*
- *None*
- *This is a very public process that needs to be in person to work well.*
- *Virtual meetings do not allow for good discussion. You cannot speak to users or staff individually. it stifles collaboration and problem solving. It also discounts those with unreliable internet or those less technically savvy.*
- *I don't see how it will be fair for the general public to have fair input into the board process. People will have no faith in the process*
- *Many rural communities do not have reliable internet let alone broadband. Others only have access via cell phone which limits streaming and data use. To reach a successful agreement between opposing groups face to face discussion is imperative. Reading Body language, talking over coffee, etc, is all limited when done virtually. Virtual meetings makes reading a room full of people and singling out strong opponents (who may be misinformed) impossible.*
- *It would be impossible to accommodate capacity. Also many stakeholders lack reliable access to online platforms.*
- *Lower participation. The meeting will be less effective.*
- *Not everyone has the access to the internet in small towns or remote living situations .*
- *The access for some people will be limited and for some of the older folks mite be very difficult. I also feel there will be lots of confusion and people will not feel like they will be heard properly.*
- *I have attended several BoF meetings over the last 40 years. The face to face interaction between Board Members, ADFG staff and stakeholders, and the public is an absolutely necessary Board process to achieve the fairest and most comprehensive Board decisions. I've participated in many Online meetings found there to be no virtual substitute for a face to face meeting. Especially considering the economic and cultural impacts BoF decisions have.*
- *Difficulty with reliable internet connection*
- *Many Alaskans have yet to embrace technology, especially fishermen, and a meeting held via zoom would limit the ability for equal opportunity for all users.*
- *Make sure that meeting is not lopsided one way or other*
- *Want to be next to whom I express my concerns.(6ft)*
- *Interactions between both the concerned public and the board, and amongst adversarial stakeholders at BoF is frequently how compromise proposals are developed.*
- *Face to face, one on one has always been the best, less options or room for the board to side with one fishery over another as ADF&G is presently doing now.*
- *Don't feel that fair representation of groups will be able to Express their opinions clearly and understand views of rural groups because of limited availability of internet service.*
- *Board of Fisheries meetings are effective because regulations are developed through collaboration and communications that takes place before, during, after meetings, during breaks , etc. A web-based platform would work for presentations and discussion Amongst the board, but would not accommodate the needed interaction with board members, stakeholders and department staff throughout the meeting. During these interactions, regulatory language is*

*developed, refined and discussed. It is then presented and decided on publicly. Without this interaction, the results would be poorly adopted regulations that have lasting biological and economic impacts.*

- *Sharing resources through controlled usage requires an understanding between user groups. The concerns of each group become better understood when communicated face to face. These meetings change organically because of this face to face communication. Also, it is absolutely imperative that personalities be considered when negotiating. Some people are just bullies. That does not translate very well through writing. Not only is this insight important at one particular meeting but many of us need this personality insight for future negotiations.*
- *I have been to many virtual meetings over the past several months. With larger groups it is very difficult to take up complex issues. I worry some people with less technical ability or connectivity will be "left out". I think the public participation would be a challenge to most and would change input to the boards.*
- *A lot of interaction happens at the meetings, including opposing sides being able to work things out and come to an agreement. How will the BOF hold their committee of the whole on proposals?*
- *lack ability to engage with other user groups and stakeholders. Some people may find it hard to access the needed computer equipment to go virtual*
- *Please read answer or opinion on question eleven*
- *The process needs personal interaction between fishery stakeholders*
- *Lack of interpersonal exchange and discussion.*
- *technical difficulties for participation in the meeting for those less familiar with virtual meeting apps or programs*
- *I think it would be nearly impossible to have a Board of Fish meeting in-person and get proper business done with some of the current measures in place. I think given the scrutiny the BOF process could come under with the chinook lawsuit in WA state, keeping the meeting as transparent as has been in the past would be best. Something to definitely bring up with lawyers. I think not having in person meetings would limit attendance for many reasons but the biggest being unreliable/ very expensive internet. It would likely suppress the voice of someone whose voice might make a big difference in a decision.*
- *It is unfair to people without internet*
- *Interaction with board members is impossible, yet necessary for complicated fisheries such as exist in Southeast Alaska. Better to postpone the cycle for all areas by one year.*
- *I sit on the Seafood Producers Cooperative Board of Directors. We have been conducting Zoom meetings since April. The meetings sometimes have as many as 20 people, which becomes difficult, although they are still effective. The amount of people that would attend a Board of Fish meeting would render the virtual platform chaotic or else it would necessarily eliminate people's ability to debate their point of view effectively. People would be shut out. Many would find the platform intimidating and frustrating with that many people trying to participate. Also, Internet access is not easy here. In my case I live on my fishing boat and the only way to get online is to hotspot my computer with my phone. This works for audio but not visual connection due to bandwidth issues.*
- *There is a long respected history of being able to personally talk to each BOF member both at the meetings and in the time period when they are in the community where the BOF meeting is taking place. It's impossible to have personal conversations via electronic methods that allow the public*

*to interact with members. It's a bad idea to change the historic way the BOF is accessible to the public.*

- *With masks, hand washing and distancing, the meetings should take place.*
- *I would prefer a virtual meeting to an in-person meeting.*
- *If the board only takes testimony online then many of the people who are the most knowledgeable will not be able to attend or have their voice heard. If the board meets in such a way then it is only to silence the voices of the people*
- *There is a lot of updated information at the meeting, and most proposals go through some editing. This back and forth information exchange and consensus building would be difficult at best in a virtual setting. The BOF has many new Board members who do not have intimate knowledge and history concerning many of the proposals that will come before them. To make regulatory changes affecting gear allocation for the next several years, with potential to shift millions of dollars from one fleet to another, should not happen without the stakeholders being in the room.*
- *Issues too complex, subject to hacking, lack of interaction with BOF members (which is one of the most important elements of in-person meetings), unequal access to technology for members of the public.*
- *Virtual Meetings make it difficult to interact with the Board Members and Department Staff to work on compromise.*
- *Don't work as well as in person*
- *The biggest benefit of the Board of Fisheries process is the ability to talk to board members individually and as a group as issues move forward, a virtual meeting would not allow a participant to deal with board members on an individual basis to further explain or make sure a board member(s) fully understand an issue.*
- *Not sufficient to carry out informed discussions.*
- *Committee as a whole would be rendered useless, and is the most important tool we have for compromise*
- *Want to be safe & more people can participate*
- *Board members don't listen as well, and held less accountable than when face to face with concerned parties affected by their decisions/indecision*
- *Virtual meeting will compromise public participation.*
- *While I myself am savvy in the Zoom world, many others are not, and it is my opinion that holding a virtual meeting would disproportionately affect certain groups of people in a negative way, many of which will be impacted by decisions made at this meeting.*
- *Implementing a zoom option would be considerate for those public members with personal safety concern, however holding the entire meeting in virtual format would unfairly excluding rural participants and especially rural stakeholders who have poor or limited internet access at best.*
- *I have participated in every PWS Board meeting since 1990. I cannot see how a virtual meeting that offer the well rounded participation that is needed for good decision making*
- *Very limited public interactions and allows the real business of the board to be held in seclusion. Very awkward settings with limited feedback. Allows the State to control the public process with no checks and balances.*
- *The Board process is built on relationships and human interactions. The relationship building with members can't happen in a virtual meeting environment. The conversations with members during breaks, before, and after meetings are just as important as the meetings themselves. The committee of the whole process would be changed and the submission of additional RC's would*

*be difficult. The last SE meeting had several hundred RC's and multiple days worth of public testimony. These things are integral to how the Board works. In my opinion it would be more effective to just delay the cycle one year and begin again in with a work session in October of 2021. I think the Board process would be better served in doing this with regard to proposals submitted by the public. The only use I see of virtual meetings is to serve some "housekeeping" proposals from ADFG that are usually met with little resistance. Thank you.*

- *The core of the collaborative decision making that happens at board of fish requires everyone to be in the same location, to be able to meet face to face and brain storm, to see all available users and take in their perspectives in side bars and meetings outside the main meeting hall. It would be impossible to recreate this environment online and many users would be silenced.*
- *Given the agendas there is too much public comment effectively via teleconference these meetings. For now BOG meetings should be limited to biological emergencies only.*
- *Many interested people don't have good internet.*
- *The Boards of Fish and Game are some of the most public processes in the country. Limiting in-person interaction reduces the ability of the public to provide meaningful input, correct the record, educate board members, and work with others to develop compromises or solutions to challenging issues.*
- *I don't believe the public will be represented properly or fully in a virtual platform.*
- *too hard to share opinions and depends too much on reliable internet connections*
- *Virtual meetings for emergency or time critical actions only. In person meeting schedule should be postponed until COVID slows dramatically.*
- *Limited internet in some areas makes it difficult for all to attend, the meeting should have a choice of in person and online*

**10. If the boards held virtual meetings, please select the methods you would be able to listen and/or participate by:**

	Count
Internet	160
Phone	102

**11. Please offer any other thoughts you would like to provide:**

- *Your regional meetings for changes, in the regulations are very important for the residents*
- *Virtual meetings may also disadvantage rural residents with fewer telecommunications resources.*
- *zoom meetings seem to be working for us during this time. not sure if there is a limit to amount participants*
- *People without good internet or phone service will be left out*
- *No meeting*
- *especially for individuals with the interest to attend and listen to the entire proceedings of the Board, there is real value in listening to discussions during breaks and evenings. Board members will sometimes informally ask public attendees for clarification or perspective on issues the Board is considering. these opportunities would be lost in virtual meetings.*
- *Delay the meeting cycle by one year (no meetings this winter).*
- *Electronic meetings would be the responsible thing to do. thank you for enquiring*

- *It's just not worth the risk and so many people who are vulnerable or live with those who are vulnerable will not attend and they would be deprived of participating fully in the meeting. It would be wrong to put people in the position where they have to choose to attend anyway or stay away and risk the consequences to an action that might harm their business.*
- *There is no easy solution but we all have to make sacrifices in the current environment. Postponing might be the best answer.*
- *I feel my comments in this survey provide an accurate view of my thoughts. Good luck in developing an acceptable and safe board meeting here in Cordova.*
- *Postpone*
- *Again, virtual meetings won't work for our BoF and will likely impede participation at meetings.*
- *A internet or phone based meeting defeats the purpose, mission, and function of a BOF meeting.*
- *I strongly believe the best way to proceed is to delay all meetings 1 year, and hold them in person.*
- *The board needs to postpone the upcoming meetings for this winter. With the Coronavirus running wild, I don't see anyway to have a fair public meeting*
- *Telephone is weak tool to attend the board of Fisheries. My gear group has asked for changes and i believe others are asking for changes that will effect my gear group. The status quo is preferable to changes that could be made on limited and therefore poorly thought out input. By basing decisions on opinions stated in on-time comments its difficult to change ones mind or even have access to new information which would enable a good solution. As in all politics face to face encounters provide what no other medium can and still be effective and fair.*
- *I know the internet is the way of things these day,s but it also lacks in the personal inter action between the board and the people attending which adds to the way the real dealing between people works things out. thank you*
- *A virtual meeting is not acceptable for a BoF meeting.*
- *In person is best even with COVID mitigation policies in place. Thank you*
- *I don't have a fancy phone or computer.*
- *If the meetings where to be delayed, would the period for proposal submissions be reopened?*
- *none of the above.*
- *As mayor of Craig Ak. And because of covid 19, we have had to try different ways of having meetings. I.E. zoom,internet, Facebook and teleconference. We haven't had very good luck with clearly understanding the topics that arise in most of these meetings, council meetings, covid 19 state meetings first responders meetings and public health meetings. We managed but a lot was lost and interested parties soon dropped out because of inability to clearly understand. These were difficult to follow as as understand all view's.*
- *Unless the department of fish and game identifies issues that are of high biological concern, the 2020-2021 board cycle could easily and responsibly be postponed by one year.*
- *1. Postponement would be better for those struggling with monetary hardship. This could affect proposal outcomes. Not based on proposal merit but on lack of public attendance in favor or against. 2. As Chairman of the Chum Trollers Association I can not ask my board or members to subject themselves and their loved ones to the risk of attendance.*
- *Seein the Board's interaction and seeing/hearing the PowerPoint presentations given by department staff is an important part of public information gathering and being able to inform their comments in person.*

- *Public participation is a key element in this process a lot of the deals that are made at bof are made in the hallways face to face if the meetings were to happen electronically this would not happen for that reason i believe bof should be postponed till a later date*
- *Electronic meetings are not as productive as in person meetings.*
- *Postpone meetings for 6 months/ 1 year.*
- *The meetings should be in person, so the should be postponed until this is controlled*
- *All fisheries can withstand putting their regular meeting cycle off by one year. The department has the flexibility to manage the fisheries under existing allocation guidelines from past boards.*
- *I am opposed to both teleconference and internet platforms to the meetings. It will favor larger more urban communities. Many small communities, such as Pelican, where I used to live would have a very hard time participating. A very important aspect of the BOF meetings, the ability to discuss the issues face to face in the meeting and during breaks, would be eliminated. There would be no face on the people that were involved in the discussions and negotiations other than the face that was selected by the moderator at a given moment. This will marginalize anyone who is not all ready very experienced at large virtual meetings and seriously diminish the public access process to the policy decisions.*
- *Because of the three year cycle, the proposals for change need to be addressed.*
- *Many people in rural areas are not able to access reliable internet so options should be for both. Significant pre-meeting time to review materials, which should also all be on-line. YouTube option for watching the Board meeting in combination with internet and phone. Maybe we should reconsider how we structure our meetings by allowing people to pose questions ahead of time and have them ranked. There are a lot of restructuring options we might consider. Perhaps an in-depth survey to the ACs could help facilitate this?*
- *Neither one is a good method.*
- *If the process went virtual, it would be impartive to slow the process down so stakeholders can adequately address new information, or disputute information that is incorrect or misleading. Many gear groups are up most the night working on responses to information, testimony, or Board input that has been received that day; submitting RCs to either amend a proposal or submit important information for consideration. Much of the "brainstorming" does not happen on paper, but in small sessions or dinner meetings. Without the ability to have these short exchanges with F&G, Board members, and other stakeholders, the process will not yield the best outcome for the resource or the user groups.*
- *Strongly believe virtual BOF meetings are a bad idea.*
- *Covid is the same as the flu and no protection was ever given to it.*
- *If you went with a virtual meeting you would also have to figure out a way for participants to have individual conversations with board members - this would be particularly difficult where the majority of the board has changed since the PWS/SE board cycle.I believe only 2 of the 7 board members are the same since last cycle.*
- *Online/phone options would be great, but in-person meeting need to be held*
- *POSTPONE!!!*
- *More people can participate*
- *Thanks*
- *Pushing this meeting back a year is the only way to ensure that anyone who wants to comment or attend has the ability to do so.*
- *By offering the zoom as an additional resource to the meeting, it may lower in person attendance enough that social distancing could be easily accomplished for the in person attendees.*

- *Postpone the meetings for a year*
- *Government operating in the shadows is an invitation for collusive activities.*
- *Please see previous comments.*
- *Virtual meetings should be held to a bare minimum of proposals. The meeting cycle should be delayed until the risk of COVID is diminished. Many who participate in the process are high-risk due to age and wouldn't be able to participate and provide meaningful input to the highly public process. A virtual meeting could be held to take up time sensitive proposals, or any proposal dealing with critical sunsets or emergencies.*
- *I believe it prudent to postpone the 2020/2021 cycle until a time in person meetings can be conducted with a greater sense of safety.*