

JOINT BOARD OF FISHERIES & GAME
Joint Board Committee
January 17, 2016
On Time Public Comment Index

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Alaska Outdoor Council Alaska Fish & Wildlife Conservation Fund

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December 30, 2015

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Glenn Haight
Executive Director II
Boards of Fish and Game
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

Dear Glenn Haight,

The Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC) and many of its individual clubs have participated in the Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Game (boards) regulatory process since their creation by the State Legislature. AOC maintains that public acceptance and participation of the regulatory process is essential for orderly management and allocation of fish and game resources consistent with the Alaska State Constitution, Article VIII, Natural Resources. AOC has been a strong supporter of funding for Boards Support Section by the Alaska Legislature for that reason.

Your October 7, 2015 memo giving an overview of current funding woes for Boards Support Section in FY17 does not adequately advise the public as to why a reduction in funding for Boards Support is necessary. The tone of the questions provided in the online **AK Fish and Game Board Process Survey** are directed toward reducing what most of those who participated in the survey consider an adequate boards process. The last sentence in your overview states:

"The following scenarios are for program changes required to meet projected budget shortfalls at status quo, and UGF reductions of 5 and 10 percent."

Why are the changes in the boards process required? The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (department) is mandated to provide for public input into the Alaska Boards process of regulating "publicly-owned" fish and game resources. The Alaska State Legislature has the responsibility to decide whether there is inadequate funding available to accomplish the statutory obligation to provide the public with a meaningful opportunity to participate in the regulatory process, not the department. The FY17 Governor's budget for ADF&G, released December 9, 2015, totals \$203,981,300. Even if you added the budget deficit of \$170K you mentioned in your overview, the expenditures for Boards Support Section is a very small part, only 1%, of the entire ADF&G budget for FY17.

The 2017 Projection Scenarios (table 1 in your October 7th overview) reports that revenues of \$1,389,100 for Boards Support Section comes out of General Funds. What funding sources are included under General Fund? The table would have better served

"Protecting your Hunting, Trapping, Fishing and Access Rights"
The Official State Association of the National Rifle Association.

the hunting, trapping, and angling public to know what portion of the General Fund sum came from their purchase of hunting, trapping, and fishing license and tags that were deposited in the Fish/Game Fund.

Why should the public's opportunity to participate in the regulatory process be diminished because of declining oil prices when, through license and tag fees, they are individually paying into the Fish/Game Fund?

Now that the **FY2017 Governor's Operating Budget for ADF&G** has been released, AOC recommends that Board Support Section update the overview presented in the October 7, 2015 memo:

- How about providing the public with a pie chart of the FY17 Governor's Budget for ADF&G showing the small percentage of the total funding for ADF&G going to Boards Support?
- A bar graph showing the budgets for Boards Support Section over the last decade would provide a much more accurate depiction of changes in funding than just stating:

"Since FY14, Boards Support's budget declined by \$240K as part of ADF&G's \$14.1 million cut in unrestricted general funds."

There is much more detail needed by the public to explain what funding sources may be used for expenditures by Boards Support Section:

- Can Federal Receipts (1002 under department totals, page 10 of FY17 Operating Budget) be used to fund AC participation in the regulatory process?
- How about using the Fish/Game Fund Match (1004) to fund the Boards Support Section, can that be done?
- Can NGOs, such as AOC, donate funds and receive the federal 3:1 match from the Sport Fish Restoration Program (DJ) funds and Wildlife Restoration Program (PR) funds to pay for AC expenditures? Or add to Boards Support revenues?

The online **AK Fish and Game Board Process Survey** (Survey) is of questionable value. There is much more the department could have asked other than questions on how to diminish department staff and public participation in the regulatory process of fish and game management and allocation.

- Why wasn't any expenditure estimates provided to the public to help them make informed decisions on which cuts in current services would help cover projected revenue shortfalls?
- Why was the public not provided an option to increase the budget to cover all the expenditures to maintain individual public and Fish & Game Advisory Committee participation in the Boards process?

*"Protecting your Hunting, Trapping, Fishing and Access Rights"
The Official State Association of the National Rifle Association.*

- A question asking the public if they would support HB134, a bill supported by user groups to increase hunting, trapping, and fishing license and tag fees, introduced during the first session of the 29th Legislature. The Department could have used that data to actively support HB134 as opposed to continuing to be inactive in their support for the legislation as they were last session.

It's going to be difficult to convince the Alaska hunting, trapping and fishing public to pay more for their license and tag fees only to have those funds used to replace Unrestricted General Funds (UGF) as suggested in the FY2017 Governor's Operating Budget while at the same time the Department recommends scenarios to reduce public participation in the AK Board of Fisheries and Game process.

The public made their position quite clear on December 9, 2015 at the Joint Board Committee Discussion on Processes and Budget and in the preliminary Survey results. They do not want to see their opportunity to participate in the AK Board of Fisheries and Game diminished. AOC hopes the Department got that message and plans to work with the public and state legislature to find other ways to fully fund ADF&Gs Boards Support Section.

Granted there are inefficiencies in the current AK Board of Fisheries and Game process that could be improved on to help reduce expenditures without disenfranchising the public. The public has not been given the budget detail necessary in the October 7th Boards Support Budget overview memo or in the FY2017 Governor's Operating Budget for ADF&G to make informed decisions on how best Board Support Section can achieve adequate funding.

During the upcoming Second Session of the 29th Legislature AOC looks forward to working with the legislature and the department on this important funding issue to help assure that the statutorily-protected public process of creating hunting, trapping, and fishing regulations remains a strong component of the AK Boards of Fisheries and Game.

Sincerely,

Rod Arno



Executive Director
Alaska Outdoor Council

Bill Iverson



President
Alaska Outdoor Council

CC:

Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senator Bill Stoltze
Representative Mark Neuman
ADF&G Commissioner Sam Cotten
Board of Game Executive Director Kristy Tibbles

Budget Savings Idea

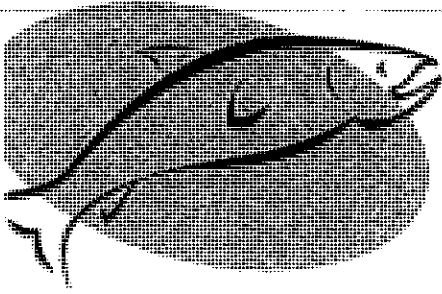
I would suggest that whenever possible boards meet virtually. As a department employee in New York state, before my retirement in 2004, I was involved in what was then a new technology, at least for us. It involved conducting meetings via conference call, and sometimes using video technology. Technological improvements in the last ten years have made that type of meeting even easier and more efficient.

In most of our state, there are locations where board members can find the needed bandwidth to remotely attend meetings. Even here in Thorne Bay, there is adequate bandwidth resources at the USFS, library or local school for attendees to participate. In those communities where the needed bandwidth does not exist, it would be much cheaper to move one or two participants to a location close to them, instead of to Anchorage, Juneau or wherever.

Reducing or eliminating travel and per diem expenses for most of the board members would result in a very substantial and significant savings. I do appreciate that a lot of good and productive work takes place outside the meeting rooms, especially in the evenings at dinner or in a hospitality room. And there may be good reasons for having key personnel actually travel, but I suspect that for the majority of participants, it would be much more efficient to have them sitting in a local conference room participating remotely.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

David Egelston
PO Box 19568
Thorne Bay, AK 99919



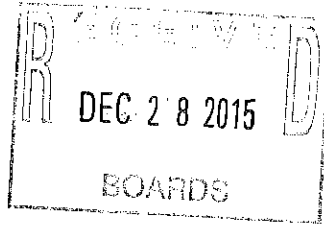
Prince William Sound Setnetter's Association

The purpose of this association is to promote, develop and enhance the setnet fishery in the Prince William Sound Area of Alaska. This non-profit association represents the interests of its members before various boards, agencies, and organizations dealing with the commercial and sport fisheries in Prince William Sound. Any person holding a set gillnet limited entry permit issued by the Alaska Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission for the Prince William Sound Administrative Area is eligible to become a member.

President: Forest Jenkins, Treasurer/Secretary: Mike Brown

December 12, 2015

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Board of Fisheries
Boards Support Section
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526



RE: Budget savings suggestions for the Board of Fisheries.

On behalf of the Prince William Sound Setnetter's Association, we would like to express our support to extend the current regional three year meeting cycle to a five year cycle. In addition, we support any associated cost savings achieved by extending this interval. All members of our association support this change.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our input.

Sincerely,

Forest Jenkins
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Mike Brown
PWS Setnetter's Association Treasurer/Secretary
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To- ADF/6 - 907-465-6094 fax
From: Mary Bishop - 455-6151 ph.
Re: Budget saving ideas

I would like to suggest these procedures, assuming they would save money. I don't know if they're practical, but please consider them.

1. Take Advisory Committee testimony via skype, etc., rather than paying for AC representatives travel and hotel.
2. Hold meetings in public buildings whenever possible – like school buildings, LIO, etc.—instead of expensive hotels. Have coffee service catered – it's inexpensive and well done in Fbx thru' Superior Coffee.
3. Reduce mailings and printings – perhaps by sending postcards which provide how to get online information.

Mary Bishop
1-11-16