

UNITED SOUTHEAST ALASKA GILLNETTERS

Box 2196, Petersburg AK 99833 * (253) 279-0707 * usag.alaska@gmail.com * akgillnet.org

USAG'S MAIN PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT, SERVE AND ENHANCE SOUTHEAST ALASKA'S COMMERCIAL GILLNET FISHERY

February 5, 2025

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
House Fisheries Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Stutes and Committee members-

United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters would like to offer our support for HB 33. Our organization has been active in the Board of Fisheries process for many cycles. The issues facing Board members are often unique to specific species and areas far from the realm of knowledge of many Board members. On occasion, a Board member will be conflicted from deliberations and voting on proposals due to his or her involvement, or a family member's involvement in a particular fishery. Unfortunately, the Board member conflicted has the greatest knowledge of the intricacies of the fishery, knowledge that would likely be helpful to other Board members in deliberations. HB 33 would allow those conflicted members to deliberate on the subject, but would not allow them to vote, thereby imparting their expertise on the subject. It is our belief that passage of this bill will make the process better, as more information and understanding is always better in making these sometimes highly allocative decisions.

Currently, there are no Board members from our area, Southeast Alaska. This is partly due to the fact there are people in the commercial fishing industry who are willing, but who would find themselves conflicted when they have meetings for our region. Our opinion is that passage of this bill will give a larger, and more knowledgeable pool of people to support for this very important job.

We appreciate your consideration of this bill, and will be following its progress.



Max Worhatch, Executive Director

