

KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

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Dale Bagley, Assembly President
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MEMORANDUM

TO: Dale Bagley, Assembly President
Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Members

FROM: Brent Johnson, Assembly Member *(B) for B.J.*

DATE: March 17, 2015

RE: Resolution 2015-015, A Resolution Endorsing Robert Ruffner's Appointment to the Alaska Board of Fisheries (Johnson)

Robert Ruffner has applied for a seat on the Alaska Board of Fisheries. His candidacy is unique in that Mr. Ruffner is neither a commercial fishing advocate, a guided fishing advocate, nor even a sportfishing advocate. He is a dipnetter. That qualification is remarkable for someone seeking a seat on the Fish Board.

Even more remarkable is Mr. Ruffner's expertise in stream-related habitat issues. For 18 years he has headed up the Kenai Watershed Forum (KWF). This group has a long list of accomplishments including the discovery that hydrocarbons from 2-cycle outboards were causing a significant pollution problem in the Kenai River. That problem was solved with the conversion to 4-cycle-only outboards. Finding culverts that blocked fish passage and replacing many of them has been another huge credit to Mr. Ruffner and the KWF. Perhaps the greatest benefit of Mr. Ruffner's influence over the past couple of decades has been his ability to educate the public on fish habitat issues.

I know Robert personally and attest to his honesty. He was appointed to replace me on the KPB Planning Commission and has demonstrated good abilities on working with people and doing the homework necessary to understand issues. It is no wonder that Robert has additionally been seated on the Road Service Area Board, the Kenai Peninsula Fish Habitat Partnership, and the North Pacific Anadromous Fish Commission. He is also Chairman of the Finance Committee for the Soldotna Chamber of Commerce.

The Alaska Board of Fisheries is often criticized because it has refused to hold Cook Inlet cycle meetings in the Kenai-Soldotna area. By putting Robert on the board, the people of the Kenai Peninsula will at least have someone to go to for expressing their concerns. I have attended many board of fisheries meetings in Anchorage and have found it very difficult to get a word in edgewise with the Board of Fish members. More important or more aggressive people keep the board of fish members busy during breaks. I think Robert will listen to all people.

I'm sure stream habitat is of utmost importance in preserving the good runs of sockeye salmon that we have and it is essential for restoring king salmon. It's time to put someone on the fish board who has a deep experience with these issues. We are lucky that the person with these qualifications is also from our own neighborhood.

Your consideration is appreciated.