

# THE BERING SEA

## North Pacific Council: Swirling in a sea of conflicts

### Who's their boss? North Pacific Council members draw paychecks from industry they regulate

**Stephanie Madsen, Juneau. Council Chair. Member since 2001. Term expires 2007. Occupation: Processor lobbyist.**

**CONFLICTS:** Registered as a lobbyist for the Pacific Seafood Processors Association, a trade group for 11 mostly foreign-owned companies that operate shore-side and mothership processor operations. In June 2004 she voted to grant a monopoly to crab processors in Alaska despite anti-trust warnings from the U.S. Department of Justice.

**INTERESTS:** Eight of the 11 members of PSPA are owned by Japanese corporations with subsidiaries that own major fish processing facilities throughout coastal Alaska:

- North Pacific Processors, Inc. subsidiary of Marubeni Corp.
- Westward Seafoods, Inc., subsidiary of Maruha Corp., Japan's top seafood producer and a Fortune 500 company.
- Supreme Alaska Seafoods, Inc. subsidiary of Maruha Corp.
- Western Alaska Fisheries, subsidiary of Maruha Corp.
- UniSea Inc., subsidiary of Nippon Suisan Kaisha Ltd, Japan's second largest marine products firm.
- Alyeska Seafoods, Inc., subsidiary of Maruha Corp.
- Peter Pan Seafoods, subsidiary of Nichiro Corporation of Japan.
- Golden Alaska Inc., subsidiary of Nichiro Corporation of Japan.

**David Benson, Kingston, Wash. Council member since 2003. Term expires 2006. Occupation: Catcher-Processor executive.**

**CONFLICTS:** Employed by Trident Seafoods Corp., a Seattle-based company with a fleet of processing boats and trawlers and more than 10 processing plants on shore. 2002 sales: \$650 million. Products: pollock, pollock roe and crab. For years, Trident has led the campaign for exclusive rights to process Bering Sea seafood. As a council member, Benson has voted in favor of granting those rights. Benson served previously on the North Pacific Council's "Advisory Panel" when in 2002 it voted against

A majority of North Pacific Fishery Management Council members - six of the 11 - work for the commercial fishing industry in Alaska. A seventh is an Anchorage bank executive. The other four Council members represent state fishery agencies in Alaska, Washington and Oregon; and the National Marine Fisheries Service regional office in Alaska. All 11 are insiders, working in various ways to keep Alaska's fishing industry alive and prosperous. What's not clear is who is working for the public interest.

imposing a restriction on fishing for overfished snow crab. Benson said the proposed limit "diminishes the value of investments made by processors." Like Trident, for example.

**INTERESTS:** Benson is a board member of the Marine Conservation Alliance, an industry group at the forefront of efforts blocking increased protection for marine mammals and deep sea corals and sponge in the Bering

1975. He is half-owner of the Kamilar and Mitkof commercial fishing vessels. He fishes for halibut, sablefish (black cod) and crab, and operates a salmon tender in the summer.

**INTERESTS:** He is president of Petersburg Vessel Owners Association, PVOA, a mostly small boat organization of independent fishing families.

In 2003 and 2004, Bundy and Benson voted to expand the pollock harvest in areas within the endangered Steller sea lion's critical habitat. Bundy's business and Benson's employer would have benefited from more pollock, but the motion failed.

Sea. Trident is among the 8 member companies of the politically powerful At-Sea Processors Association.

**John Bundy, Seattle. Council member since 1999. Term expires 2005. Occupation: Catcher-Processor executive.**

**CONFLICTS:** President and part owner of Glacier Fish Company, a Seattle-based company that operates two pollock factory trawlers and one freezer longliner in the North Pacific.

**INTERESTS:** Bundy is a board member of the At-Sea Processors Association, of which Glacier Fish is a member. Norton Sound Economic Development Cooperative, an organization representing 15 native villages, is half owner of Glacier Fish. The cooperative gets 50 percent of Glacier Fish's profits.

**Arne Fuglvog, Petersburg, Alaska. Council member since 2003. Term expires 2006. Occupation: Fishing vessel owner.**

**CONFLICTS:** Arne Fuglvog has been a commercial longliner since

**CONFLICTS:** Hoedel, of Anchorage and Kodiak, is a 30-year Alaska fisherman, and has participated in many different fisheries, using all types of gear. He owns a trawl vessel and fishes in the Gulf of Alaska and Bering Sea. Before his appointment to the Council in 2004, Hoedel was widely endorsed by the fishing industry.

**INTERESTS:** Crabbing. He is the stepson of the late Oscar Dyson, a pioneer in the king crab fishery in Bristol Bay and a North Pacific Council member 1985 to 1994. Hoedel worked on Dyson's boat.

**Edward B. Rasmuson, Anchorage. Council member since 2004. Term expires 2007. Occupation: Banker, philanthropist.**

**CONFLICTS:** Rasmuson is a regional president for Wells Fargo in Alaska, and previously was chairman of National Bancorp of Alaska before its merger with Wells Fargo in 2000. Commercial fishing is important to the Alaska economy, and to the bank. In 2000, seafood constituted 43 percent of Alaska's exports and ranked as its leading employer, according to National Bancorp's annual report that year.

**INTERESTS:** Rasmuson was a member of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. His father, Elmer, was a former CEO of National Bank of Alaska and was the first chair of the North Pacific Council. Edward is on the board of the Rasmuson Fisheries Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

**Hazel Nelson, Anchorage. Council member since 2001. Term expires 2007. Occupation: Village executive.**

**CONFLICTS:** Employed as president of Becharof Corp., the Native corporation for the village of Egegik, and is a board member of the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation which invests in many fishery related businesses.

**INTERESTS:** The Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program, which allocates a percentage of all Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands quotas for groundfish, prohibited species, halibut, and crab to eligible communities. The purpose of the CDQ Program is to provide the means for starting or supporting commercial fisheries businesses that would boost an ongoing, regionally based, fisheries-related economy in Western Alaska.

**Douglas Hoedel, Anchorage. Council member since 2004. Term expires 2007. Occupation: Fishing vessel owner.**