

# Bristol Bay Times

9/27/07

## Alaska politicians create dissonance in Bristol Bay

Alaskans should feel proud of our current high environmental standards for natural resource development.

There isn't a state in the United States that compares, so it is sad to have politicians such as Jay Ramras, Bryce Edgmon, Nancy Dahlstrom, Les Gara, Beth Kerrula and others politicize natural resource development in our state.

In addition, sportsman's groups, lodge owners, numerous conservation groups and fish-processing companies are all part of this concerted effort. These politicians' actions and proposed legislation to halt development doesn't make any sense when considering our current high standards.

It makes one wonder what other purpose drives their quest to stop any and all natural resource development in Bristol Bay. Lacking any proof of any environmental damages, is this



### COMMENT

LORIANNE  
RAWSON

For Alaska Newspapers

their form of a presumptive strike?

By their actions, they have driven a wedge between family members, villages and ethnic groups. They have instilled war-torn fear without any proof that development will destroy any renewable resources or devastate the water ways, land and air.

They have also instilled fear in many local village people, making them afraid that their traditional lifestyle, hunting and fishing will totally disappear as a result.

Generally, prudent politicians wait for study reports to voice their judgments. However, in the current case, Reps. Ramras, Edgmon and their allies are not willing to follow the rules which have worked so well in the past.

So the question remains: What is it that drives these politicians to cause such disharmony among the people of Bristol Bay?

Additionally, it doesn't make sense that these same politicians and related groups would be the first of many to oppose a state constitutional amendment that allows a subsistence priority for Alaskan Natives yet use the loss of subsistence to further support their no-development legislation. Does the end justify their means?

Rural Alaska is already suffering from a lack of employment and faced with rising energy costs. How are these politicians addressing these pressing needs? Or are they saying welfare is the only option?

Rep. Bryce Edgmon hasn't offered any remedies when addressing his district's lack of employment and high-cost energy needs. He doesn't have any plans; it may be that he is

fleeing his hungry ego instead of solving pressing problems.

The anti-development politicians and their related groups are not only pursuing legislation to stop natural resource development in Bristol Bay but are also actively engaged in municipal, village and regional corporation elections, using hired lobbyists to solicit friendly candidates to further their anti-development positions.

Of course, their financial support of certain candidates isn't disclosed to the public. This is all part of their reckless efforts to further their cause.

Our state will be in trouble if we stand aside or give any credibility to those politicians. There is comfort, however, that the majority of our state legislature is made up of prudent and sensible people, unlike these shortsighted politicians who are led by some distant star or some secretive group or purpose.

We depend on the prudent and responsible legislators who are in the majority.

One can be certain in the end, regardless the outcome of natural resource development in Bristol Bay and the state of Alaska, that these politicians and opposing parties will not feel an ounce of remorse for the disharmony they have caused to the people of Bristol Bay. Their reckless actions will take years to heal the division.

The authors of HB 134 and companion SB 67 should feel ashamed for their political and reckless actions.

Lorianne Rawson is a commercial fisherman from South Naknek.