



Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association

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PRESS RELEASE

Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association Elects Ray Melovidov as New President

The Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (CBSFA) Board of Directors is pleased to announce the election of Ray Melovidov as the new President of the organization. CBSFA is one of six Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups serving the coastal communities of the Bering Sea, and manages fishery resources for the economic and social well-being of the community of Saint Paul Island in the Pribilofs.

Melovidov is assuming the leadership of CBSFA upon the retirement of long-time President Phillip Lestenkof. Under Lestenkof's tenure as President, CBSFA achieved extraordinary financial growth; CBSFA's total assets have grown nearly 20-fold from 1999 to the end of 2022. This allowed CBSFA to greatly expand its benefits and contributions to the community. Lestenkof assembled a dedicated team at CBSFA, and is leaving the company in good hands at every level.

"I am truly a product of CBSFA and the opportunities afforded by the CDQ program – I've fished CDQ halibut; CBSFA's scholarship funding helped put me through school, and support from the President, Board, and staff have allowed me to grow into what I am today," said Melovidov.

"While the community faces some significant challenges, CBSFA is well positioned to help deal with them and continue contributing to the community. I look forward to serving Saint Paul as best as I can," Melovidov said.

Melovidov was born and raised in Saint Paul Island and lives there with his family. He has been a commercial and subsistence halibut fisherman for 29 years. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics, cum laude, from the University of Alaska, Anchorage, and has a strong background in business management and public policy, with over 20 years of involvement in the commercial fishing industry and fishery management processes.

The new President has been working for CBSFA for 22 years, and served as the COO for the last six years, responsible for developing and managing community programs and projects, as well as managing some of CBSFA's wholly-owned subsidiaries and fishing quotas. Melovidov has also served on the City Council of Saint Paul since 2015.

Retiring President Lestenkof has been the President of CBSFA for 24 years, since 1999; he has been on the Board of Directors for 30 years, since 1993. During his time as leader of CBSFA, the total assets increased from \$6.7M to \$132M (latest audited financial statements), creating unprecedented opportunities and benefits for the community of Saint Paul Island.

Lestenkof was born on Saint George Island, and has lived and worked on Saint Paul Island for 60 years. He has been a subsistence fisherman for 55 years, and a commercial halibut fisherman for 41 years. He is the owner/captain of the FV Niqaâ, providing local crew member and baiter jobs at Saint Paul Island for many years. He was a United States Commissioner on the International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC) for ten years, and has participated in the IPHC for 29 years.

The outgoing President served on the Board of Directors of the Bering Sea Fishermen's Association for 21 years. Lestenkof also represented CBSFA for ten years on the Board of Directors of the Western Alaska Community Development Association (WACDA). WACDA is a non-profit group that consists of representatives from all six CDQ groups, and administers the self-governance of the CDQ program as mandated in the Magnuson-Stevens Act.

"It has been a great privilege to serve as the President of CBSFA and work for the community of Saint Paul Island. Also, I ran for the CBSFA Board of Directors at its 2023 annual membership meeting held on December 17, 2023, and got re-elected by the CBSFA membership. So, I'm not completely retired from CBSFA. I sincerely thank the CBSFA membership for their continued support. I have a sincere desire that CBSFA remains a stable company that will provide benefits to the present and future generations of our community," said Lestenkof.

For additional information, contact Ray Melovidov at (907) 546-2597