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Governor Walker issues AO 297 on Alaska’s Mariculture Task Force, expands Revolving Loan Fund
Walker looks to a \$100 million mariculture industry by 2040

AUGUST 27, 2018 KETCHIKAN – Alaska’s blue economy took a big step forward today at the Hump Island Oyster farm outside Ketchikan, where Governor Walker signed an administrative order and a bill aimed at growing the mariculture industry throughout Alaska.

Governor Walker issued Administrative Order 297, extending the life of Alaska’s Mariculture Task Force. The 11-member Task Force, established in February 2016 by [Administrative Order 280](#), released their [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) earlier this year, a comprehensive plan for growing the mariculture industry in Alaska. The Development Plan includes five priorities: expand participation, coordinate and refine regulations, establish accessible funding, and conduct necessary research to create a thriving mariculture industry worth \$100 million by 2040.

By renewing the Task Force today, Governor Walker established it as an ongoing advisory panel to work with state, federal, tribal, industry, and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the Development Plan. The Task Force will present recommendations and a progress report to the Governor by May 1, 2021.

“Mariculture is a uniquely well-suited industry for Alaskan investment,” Governor Walker said. “It expands our strong renewable fisheries industry, creates jobs, offers a scalable business model that can thrive from Alaska’s smallest coastal communities to our largest ports, and opens the door to a new knowledge economy that can be a model for the world. From oysters to scallops to sea cucumbers to kelp, I look forward to seeing how Alaskans approach a new industry frontier.”

At the oyster farm, Governor Walker also signed HB 76, sponsored by Rep. Dan Ortiz, which accomplishes one of the Plan’s goals by expanding the [Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund](#) to create new financing options for mariculture businesses. There are currently active or planned mariculture efforts throughout Alaska’s 30,000 miles of coastline, from Ketchikan, Craig, Sitka, Hoonah, Juneau, Cordova, Seward, Homer, and Kodiak, to the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands.

In Ketchikan today, Governor Walker also signed HB 18 and HB 354, both sponsored by Rep. Dan Ortiz. HB 18 allows the human-powered boat Race to Alaska to apply for a race classic permit. HB 354 streamlines the process of adjusting member assessments within Alaska’s dive fishery organization.