

MADE IN ALASKA

MARICULTURE

To: Representative Dan Ortiz
State capitol Room 513, Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3824
Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov

RE: Support for HB 41 – shellfish enhancement & ASMI marketing aquatic farm products

Dear Representative Ortiz,

February 11, 2021

On behalf of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force), I would like to express strong support for House Bill 41, which will accomplish two priority recommendations of the Task Force, as a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

The Task Force believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster, and passage of HB 41 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. The Task Force members recognize the difficult circumstances that cut short the 2020 legislative session in which a committee substitute version of HB 41 was in its final committee of referral and poised for passage. We thank you for introducing the bill again.

In 2016, Governor Walker established and appointed members to the Task Force by [Administrative Order No.280](#), and in 2018, the Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in order to accelerate the development of mariculture - the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) (attached is a [brief summary](#)). The Task Force was re-authorized in 2018 to continue to work towards implementation of the Plan. Upon his election, Governor Dunleavy kept the Task Force in place, because he shares the vision of what mariculture could mean to the state: jobs and opportunities.

HB 41 has broad stakeholder support and will accomplish two priority recommendations contained within the statewide comprehensive plan. More specifically, HB 41 will accomplish the following:

- 1) allow for shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration; and
- 2) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow marketing of aquatic farm products.

After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope and a path to economic recovery. The Task Force strongly believes that mariculture can be part of the economic recovery and HB 41 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment – a bright spot on the horizon.

Thank you for your consideration of this mariculture bill as part of a package of legislation that creates and supports economic activity for Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Heather McCarty, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc: Alaska Mariculture Task Force