
MADE IN ALASKA

MARICULTURE

To: Representative Dan Ortiz
Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov

RE: Support for CSHB 41

Dear Representative Ortiz,

April 17, 2020

On behalf of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force), I would like to express strong support for the Senate Finance Committee Substitute version of HB 41, which would accomplish several 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 members recognize the difficult circumstances that cut short legislative action on CSHB 41. However, it was still a great disappointment to be dead in the water although the bill was in its last committee of referral after efforts by industry, successive administrations and the Legislature for five years to pass this important enabling legislation.

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; however, passage of CSHB 41 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. If there is a chance for the Legislature to come back into session, please consider passage of this bill as a priority.

In 2016, Governor Walker established and appointed members to the Task Force by [Administrative Order No.280](#), with the directive to provide recommendations to develop a viable and sustainable mariculture industry. 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](#) of the full Plan). The Task Force was re-authorized in 2018 by [AO No. 297](#) in order 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.

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

- 1) allow for shellfish enhancement and restoration;
- 2) reduce burden on industry and state agencies to renew compliant aquatic farm leases after the first 10-year term;
- 3) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow (rather than prohibit) marketing of aquatic farm products; and

4) designate eco-tourism and public education as allowable activities at aquatic farms.

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

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

Good health to you.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc: Senator Cathy Giessel, Senate President
Senator Lyman Hoffman, Senate Majority Leader
Senator Tom Begich, Senate Minority Leader
Senators Bert Stedman and Natasha Von Imhof, Co-Chairs, Senate Finance Committee
Senator Gary Stevens
Rep. Edgmon, Speaker of the House
Rep. Thompson, House Majority Leader
Rep. Lance Pruitt, House Minority Leader
Rep. Foster and Johnston, Co-Chairs, House Finance Committees
Rep. Stutes, Chair, House Fisheries Committee
Alaska Mariculture Task Force