

To; Gov Walker
From MTF
Re: Marine Aquaculture Act of 2017

The Mariculture Task Force was made aware of the Marine Aquaculture Act of 2017 being introduced by Senator Wicker at its last regular meeting in January. The proposed act aims to “establish a regulatory system for marine aquaculture in the United States exclusive economic zone...”. The MTF has read the proposed act and finds it to be highly compatible with the aims of the MTF for promoting and developing mariculture in Alaska. The act makes it possible to extend mariculture operations to the EEC of the US. The act provides for the formation of an Office of Aquaculture within the National Marine Fisheries Service. The listed duties of this office are not only to issue permits, but also to enhance the development of aquaculture throughout the US.

The proposed act has clearly had a great deal of thought put into it. It covers all aspects of offshore aquaculture including coordinated permit application, structure requirements, appropriate locations, conflicts with other users, environmental impact statements, termination of activities, site remediation, regulatory oversight and state review. One important provision is that such permits will not be issued for species that are prohibited for aquaculture by the state nearest to the offshore site. Thus, it would not be possible to aquaculture any finfish off the shores of Alaska.

The MTF encourages the Governor to carefully read this proposed act and to write letters to our legislatures promoting this proposed legislation.