



Press Release

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Alaska Mariculture Task Force Announces Indications of Mariculture Growth

State receives applications for new oyster and kelp farms; first commercial harvest of Alaska-grown seaweed; Alaska Legislature advances four bills to support responsible mariculture growth

May 31, 2017, Juneau – The Alaska Mariculture Task Force, established by Governor Walker in 2016, announced that Alaska has recently experienced tangible indications of mariculture growth.

New farms planned

The State of Alaska recently received applications for over 1,000 acres of new oyster and kelp farms. These permit applications are an indicator that there is developing interest and growth in the mariculture industry in Alaska. The applications include new aquatic farm sites in Southeast, Southcentral, and Southwest Alaska.

“Members of the Task Force have dedicated tremendous time and effort toward advancing this industry for Alaska,” said Commissioner Chris Hladick of the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. “The Task Force is encouraged to see the number of applications being submitted for new oyster and kelp farms.”

Seaweed farm harvests

Over the past month, three new farms have harvested Alaska-grown seaweed for the first time. The harvests occurred on farms in Ketchikan and Kodiak owned by Alaskans. Although farmers report that there is much still to be learned about efficiently growing and harvesting seaweed, they are optimistic about the future and have plans to expand production.

Mariculture legislation progress

During this session, the Alaska Legislature advanced four bills to support responsible growth of the mariculture industry. [House Bill 128](#) and [Senate Bill 89](#) are companion bills which would allow non-profits to pursue shellfish enhancement and restoration projects with oversight by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. [HB 76](#) and [SB 95](#) are companion bills to amend the Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund to include eligibility for hatcheries in order to support and encourage in-state seed production of shellfish and seaweed. All four bills received broad support from fishermen, communities, economic development organizations, community development quota groups, and the Alaska Mariculture Task Force.

The Alaska Mariculture Task Force would like to thank all those who worked on the bills, including the sponsors and co-sponsors and the agency staffs. Supporters hope the bills will pass expeditiously during the 2018 Legislative session.

For more information regarding these mariculture developments, please contact Linda Mattson at the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development at 907-465-2500 or linda.mattson@alaska.gov

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