

To: Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT)
RE: Science, Technology, and Innovation Committee update
Date: August 16, 2022

The Alaska Bycatch Review Task Force (ABRT) Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Committee met on July 7 and received a presentation on the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Alaska Blue Economy Center (ABEC) from ABEC Director Justin Sternberg. ABEC was founded in 2019 to serve as a resource to the State and stimulate new external funding in fisheries, mariculture, energy, marine observing, technology, and training. Mr. Sternberg described how a theoretical bycatch innovation research fund, if supported by the State of Alaska, could serve Alaskan fishery research through the pairing of university researchers with industry stakeholders in innovative research. The committee engaged in thoughtful discussion regarding ABEC's potential to benefit the UAF Pollock Conservation Cooperative Research Center (PCCRC), among other entities engaged with relevant research. Further, the committee discussed the anticipated timeline for its remaining activities, and its role to serve the ABRT by organizing research recommendations for penultimate task force approval. The committee received public comment, including recommendations for future presentations. Committee members present included Ragnar Alstrom, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, and Tommy Sheridan. ABRT Chair John Jensen was also in attendance.

The STI Committee met again on August 5, where it received a presentation from PCCRC Director Dr. Keith Criddle, and Alaska Ocean Cluster (AOC) Managing Director Garrett Evridge. Dr. Criddle introduced a newly created Master of Marine Policy Program, which is a joint degree offered through UAF and University of Alaska Southeast (UAS). Dr. Criddle provided an historical overview of the PCCRC and the support that it has received since 2000 from industry stakeholders, which includes \$9.5 million (USD) for marine research and education, and \$7 million to capitalize endowments for research and the Ted Stevens Marine Policy professorship at UAF, which Dr. Criddle holds. To date, the PCCRC has provided financial support to 56 graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, many of whom have pursued careers in Alaska with state and federal agencies, education and research organizations, and private business. Dr. Criddle summarized research projects conducted through PCCRC since its inception and informed the committee of its 2022 research priorities. AOC Managing Director Evridge described his organization's history and projects of relevance to the ABRT. The AOC is a startup accelerator focused on technological innovations that benefit Alaska's maritime industries, its coastal economies, and ocean ecosystems. Mr. Evridge argued that startups will play a key role in modernizing Alaska's fisheries. The committee continued its discussion of the task force's draft committee report template and received comment from members of the public. In attendance were committee members Ragnar Alstrom, Linda Kozak, Stephanie Madsen, and Tommy Sheridan, in addition to ABRT Chair John Jensen and task force member Karma Ulvi. The committee agreed to meet next on Thursday, September 1.