

Subject: Department of Agriculture Letter
Date:

Kodiak Game Ranch
Box 1608
Kodiak, Alaska 99615

March 14, 2011

Representative Steve Thompson
Representative Beth Kerttula

This letter is in support of developing and reinstating a Department of Agriculture in our state. A Department is needed especially to sustain Alaska's food supply. The fact is that in the event of a catastrophe, the food supply for our citizens would last at the most just a few days!

Whereas the DNR has higher priorities than agricultural programs, a Department of Ag. would concentrate on Alaska's food source.

We need to reinstate a Department of Agriculture as we had in the past. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Bill Burton
Kathy Burton
Buck Burton

Kodiak Game Ranch

Attn: Rep S. Thompson
Beth Kertula

Re: HB191

As a farmer in Point Mackenzie, I would like to go on record in support of HB 191. I believe the attention to agriculture in this state has been sadly lacking. In fairness I attribute this to DNR having so many responsibilities, that by the time agriculture is looked at, there is little leadership and direction from the top. We need to ALL be moving in the same direction.

This lack of attention can be seen from a lack of a true plan for the needs of Alaskans and its farmers. I think there are things in this bill that I do NOT agree with, but the one thing that this bill does, is address the inattention to Agriculture and allows agriculture to have a "seat at the table".

Sincerely,

Lynn Gattis
Gattis Farms
907-373-0300

PS I plan on testifying tomorrow on this bill

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been involved with the agriculture community in Kodiak since 1963 when we purchased a cattle ranch at Kalsin Bay. We took a big hit in the 1964 tidal wave loosing many of our purebred Scottish Highland cattle we had shipped all the way from Colorado. We revived and added a large lease and cattle from the adjoining ranch a few years later that resulted in a cattle ranch encompassing 50,000 acres of lease and we ran nearly 1000 head of cattle. At that time agriculture was at it's peak with seven large cattle operations on the road system on Kodiak.

I remember when the transition was made from the Department of Agriculture to the Division of Agriculture and the great concern the ranchers had about that change. The fear at that time was that the emphasis on support for agriculture in Alaska would be greatly diminished. The timing of this was also coupled with the Native Land Claim Settlement Act that allowed for native selection of lands that encroached on some of the lease hold interests.

Those fears have come to reality in the place agriculture has been able to hold in the state.

I strongly support the switch back to the Department of Agriculture. Agriculture in our state needs renewed emphasis and support if we are to increase the level of production to serve our needs. I recently saw a statistic that said we produce 3% of our food. I have recently taken part in the USDA hoop house project which is very exciting in trying to increase local production of vegetables. Please support the move to the Department of Agriculture.

Sincerely,

Marie Rice
10746 Bells Flats Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 487-2589
mariejrice@gmail.com

