



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

National Marine Fisheries Service

P.O. Box 21668

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1668

January 13, 2009

Governor Sarah Palin
Alaska State Capital Building
Third Floor
P. O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0020

Dear Governor Palin:

The purpose of this letter is to express the support of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) for the formation of an Alaska Council on Invasive Species. A bill that would realize this goal is being introduced by Representative Craig Johnson to the 26th Alaska Legislature. NMFS hopes that Alaska will recognize both the threat invasive species pose to economic, environmental and human health, and the unique opportunity for Alaska to get “ahead of the curve” to prevent and control invasions early, when it is most economically feasible to do so. Invasive species experts from the lower 48 states and other countries repeatedly emphasize this advantage in the State of Alaska, but only for now. With climate change and increasing opportunities for many vectors to bring undesirable non-native species to Alaska, this enviable position will not last forever. Forming an Alaska Council to bring action to the problem will save money in the long run and preserve the integrity of Alaska’s economy, environment and public health.

NMFS has been working closely with the Alaska Invasive Species Council and many other partners on the invasive species issue in Alaska. We have been impressed with the high degree of interest, enthusiasm, expertise and effort that has allowed much progress. More progress is needed, however, with the formation of an Alaska Council that is sufficiently funded to carry out its mandates. NMFS will seek to help bring success to minimizing the impacts of invasive species in Alaska as much as possible by participating as a Federal partner with an Alaska Council on Invasive Species.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions regarding our support for the formation of an Alaska Council on Invasive Species, please, please contact Linda Shaw at 907-586-7643 or linda.shaw@noaa.gov.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Mecum
Acting Administrator, Alaska Region



cc: Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Craig Johnson
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Juneau, AK 99801-1182

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