



January 27, 2010

Representative Alan Austerman
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Austerman:

The Alaskan Shellfish Growers Association (ASGA) is pleased to endorse your efforts under House Bill 252 to include aquatic farmers under the Alaskan Grown Program.

Representative Harris introduced a similar bill about three years ago that passed the House by a wide margin and died in the Senate. We strongly supported that effort and are pleased that you've decided to give it another try.

The Alaskan Grown language was made necessary by a change in the authority of the Department of Natural Resources regarding promotion of Alaska seafood products. The change in statutory language effectively prohibited DNR from promoting farmed shellfish as a product farmed in Alaska. DNR subsequently allowed shellfish farmers already enrolled in the Alaskan Grown Program to continue using the label, but prohibited the inclusion of additional farming operations.

Alaska oysters are gaining recognition in the marketplace as some of the best available on the half shell. Our ability to penetrate some of the country's best oyster bars comes in large part from the image consumers around the world have of Alaska: pure waters and great seafood. We're proud to label our product as grown in Alaska waters; the label can help.

Thank you for submitting HB 252.

Sincerely,

Rodger Painter
ASGA President

Rodger Painter, president
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