

The History of Agriculture in Alaska and Support for a Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF)

In 1945 the Territorial Legislature created the Alaska Department of Agriculture for the purpose of promotion and development of agriculture. Agriculture is specifically identified in the State constitution. Prior to statehood, there was a Territorial Commissioner of Agriculture (George W. Gasser) who headed the Alaska Department of Agriculture. (<http://www.litsite.org/index.cfm?section=Digital-Archives&page=Industry&cat=Agriculture&viewpost=2&ContentId=2710>) **Certain functions in agriculture were established prior to statehood, such as a creation of the Agricultural Revolving Load Fund in 1953 with a \$1 million authorization.**

“The funds have dwindled because ARLF was set up to revolve, but it hasn’t. **It has not received general funding since 1986 and \$12 million total has been siphoned from the coffers to supply the Alaska Division of Agriculture’s operating expenses since 2004.**”¹ It should also be noted that funds have been siphoned off for other purposes other than funding the Division of Agriculture. There was a sizeable amount taken out for fire fighting. I believe that may have been in the \$2 million mark.

“In Alaska in 1987 there were 1,026,732 acres of agriculture land in production, in 2007 there were 881,585 acres of land in production, a decrease of 15%. When looking at the agriculture we produce here as compared to the rest of the United States **we rank 50th in almost all areas.** (<http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/>). This is not because of lack of producible land, lack of water or acceptable growing season. There needs to be a change in the political outlook for agriculture in Alaska.”²

It has been reported by a speaker at our **Alaska Farm Bureau** annual meeting held in November of 2010 that Indiana recently created a cabinet level Department of Agriculture and Food. Prior to this, I believe that there were only a few states (one of which is Alaska) who did not have a cabinet level department of agriculture. Vermont was another; they (in the last decade) were also successful in creating an Agency of Agriculture which is at the cabinet level. Upon review of the agricultural agencies in the United States, it appears that Rhode Island and Alaska may share the distinction of not having a cabinet level agency or department. I believe that Rhode Island and Anchorage may be the same size.

In a 147 page **Ten-Year Plan for Alaska’s Agricultural Development** submitted by a committee in 1983, **Alaska Agricultural Action Council (AAAC)** members (Richard Lyon, Chairman Commissioner of the Department of Commerce and Economic Development; Richard Neve, Commissioner of Department of Environmental Conservation; Peter McDowell, Director Division of Budget and Management; Paul Huppert, Palmer farmer; and Steve Hamilton, Palmer Farmer; James Drew, UAF Dean School of Agriculture and Land Resources Management; and Weymeth E. Long, State Conservationist, USDA; for Governor Bill Sheffield sited that “The responsibilities of the AAAC and the Division of Agriculture either frequently overlap or fail to provide a necessary service. The AAAC was responsible for the Delta Project and for subsequent projects and has taken advocacy positions on behalf of the Alaska agricultural

¹ Alaska Business Monthly, March 2011 “Banking on Agriculture” p.64

² <http://www.adlinc.blogspot.com>

industry. Because the Division of Agriculture is a part of a large department (DNR), it has been unable to devote its complete attention to planning or administering projects.”

“Coordination between financing and farm development is a serious problem. The ARLF is responsible for credit programs that are critical to the success or failure of agricultural projects, even though the AAAC has overall project responsibility. The ARLF is administered by the Division of Agriculture, with no coordination or responsibility shared with the AAAC. “

“Several options for administrative reorganization should be considered. These include combining the functions of both groups into one agency or the other, are combining the functions of both groups, along with other functions, into a Department of Agriculture. “

“At the very least, more coordination between the AAAC and the Division of Agriculture will be required as agricultural development continues. This would become easier if both were in a single organization. Ultimately, if the State of Alaska is to have a relatively larger agricultural industry, a Department of Agriculture should be considered. “

“The Resources Committee offered on **05/18/81 HCR 29** in the House for House concurrent resolution No. 29 (Finance) relating to the development of a plan for Alaska agricultural development. Whereas the legislature determines that the agricultural development goals of the state are to

- 1. Promote self-sufficiency and to decrease dependency on imported foods;**
- 2. Provide opportunities for Alaskan to produce their own food individually and collectively;**
- 3. Provide employment for Alaska;**
- 4. Provide nutritional food products from local sources for Alaska;**
- 5. Develop a self-supporting agriculture industry in Alaska;**
- 6. Encourage the export of surplus agricultural products; and**
- 7. Ensure that agricultural development proceeds with sound environmental practices and energy efficiency;”³**

The Alaska Farm Bureau 2010 Resolution Platform was approved by those voting members (delegates) attending the annual meeting where they unanimously supported a cabinet level Department of Agriculture. The Alaska Farm Bureau submits Alaska’s Long-Range Plans on a regular basis. These include agricultural entities of transportation, standards, marketing, land sales, tax issues, renewable energy, etc. Testifying for HB 191 in support of a Department of Agriculture and Food was Alaska Farm Bureau President, Bryce Wrigley; Lyall Brasier, Delta Farm Bureau President; Ruby Hollembaek , President Alaska Diversified Livestock Association, Inc.; and several producers from around the state one of which was Paul Huppert who was also an AAAC member with the 10 year report submitted in 1983. Another testimony was from a rancher who remembered when the transition happened from a Department of Agriculture and moved to a division under the Department of Natural Resources. I believe she was from Kodiak and if my memory serves me correctly, Kodiak Game Rancher, Bill Burton, read her testimony.

³ Ten Year Plan for Alaska’s Agricultural Development, p.108-114

"In a report prepared for President Barack Obama and Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, and based on forums conducted by State USDA Alaska Farm Service Agency Danny Consenstein and Alaska State Direction USDA Rural Development Jim Nordlund the following facts were derived from meetings held across Alaska (Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Juneau and Anchorage) to provide input on what works and what does not work when it comes to job creation and retention, especially in rural Alaska. Three areas for potential job growth emerged from all four meetings:

- Food Systems
- Renewable energy/energy efficiency
- Rural Infrastructure"

"Even in Alaska's urban areas, most purchased food has to travel thousands of miles just out reach grocery store shelves. To arrive in Alaska's remote communities, the journey is even farther. Spoilage rates and prices are both high, especially in rural villages. This challenge provides opportunities for innovation in developing methods for growing, processing and transporting food more locally and efficiently. These opportunities tie in directly to energy costs, training and infrastructure. "⁴

In an open letter to all Alaska Farmers, Bryce Wrigley says it best when he states:

"Farmers and ranchers are thwarted by regulations that prohibit the growth and expansion of the industry. Agencies providing inspection services, veterinary services and the oversight of land issues are currently functions of several different agencies. **Locating these basic agricultural services in a single Department of Agriculture will increase efficiency by focusing all the resources on the mission of providing food for Alaska.**"

As the former Department of Natural Resources retired land director, Glen Franklin, walked by my table at the Delta Farm Forum this last February, he asked who was behind the move to create a Department of Agriculture. I explained that I supported such a move. He stated, "It's about time." After dialogue, he said a commissioner would probably be paid half again as much as the division director is paid but he didn't see where the extra cost would be in creating such a move back to the original intentions of our state founding fathers. After all, DNR is housed in Fairbanks so a DOAF could be located as is in Palmer.

When asked what the legislature and Governors' office can do for Alaskan agriculture, my answer is: "The same thing you do for oil, gas, fisheries, and other resources in our land. We want to sit at the table with and conduct business about our product and available food, fiber and fuel for all Alaskans. We simply want a seat. **We want a cabinet level seat.** We don't want to be a division under a department. It hasn't worked. Nearly every state in the union has a cabinet level department or agency. With our unique geographical location, it is paramount that we return to the original Department of Agriculture that was in our first State constitution in 1945."

⁴ Alaska Forums on Jobs and Economic Development, February 15, 2010 USDA, Rural Development Farm Service Agency, pgs.4-5

Support Documentation for an Alaska Department of Agriculture and Food
From Ruby Hollembaek 04/07/2011

Respectfully and with high regards I submit this plea to continue with the movement of HB 191 for a Department of Agriculture and Food. Thank you for supporting Alaskan agriculture and regards to all who care.

From: Katrina Skidmore
Sent: Monday, March 26, 2012 8:46 AM
To: Louie Flora; Linda Hay
Subject: FW: Indiana's State Department of Agriculture's site

Katrina Skidmore

Legislative Information Officer
Delta Junction LIO
907.895.4236

From: Ruby Peck-Hollembaek [<mailto:rhubarb99737@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, March 25, 2012 3:03 PM
To: Katrina Skidmore
Subject: Indiana's State Department of Agriculture's site

<http://www.in.gov/isda/files/2009StrategicUpdate.pdf>

Please include this on the bottom of my letter as a reference to Indiana's State Department of Agriculture.

Thank you. Ruby

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Scott and Ruby Hollembaek
907/895-4715 (shop)
907/895-9810 (fax)

Game Ranch: www.bisonandelk.com
Community Gardens: www.wecangrowit.blogspot.com
Rhubarb: www.akrhubarb.blogspot.com

Testimony March 26, 2012 re: HB191 Ruby Hollembaek HC 62 Box 5580 Delta Jct., AK 99737

The Alaska Department of Agriculture and Food would work with officials on the local, state and federal level to benefit all Alaskans involved in the agriculture industry. The Department's function would be to educate and serve those who have the power to improve the direction of the agriculture industry in Alaska. The Department would work with state agencies, rural communities, consumers, producers, and agricultural organizations to ensure that Alaska has laws and regulations that are based in science and do not impede economic development in agriculture.

The department would serve as a regulatory department by assisting agricultural businesses with the permit process required to conduct business in Alaska. They would promote the growth of agricultural businesses by serving as a liaison between agricultural businesses, state agencies, and local units of government.

By reinstating the Department of Agriculture, the department would ensure that agriculture remains a central part of the Alaskan economy.

When Alaska regains their Department of Agriculture, they would regain control of their own budget. At this time, the budget is small and lies beneath the Department of Natural Resources. No industry can be supported as an afterthought. That is what Alaskan agriculture has become over the last 2.5 decades, an afterthought.

"In a report prepared (February 15, 2010) for President Barack Obama and Secretary of the US Department of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, and based on forums conducted by State USDA Alaska Farm Service Agency Danny Consenstein and Alaska State Director USDA Rural Development Jim Nordlund the following facts were derived from meetings held across Alaska (Fairbanks, Kotzebue, Juneau and Anchorage) to provide input on what works and what does not work when it comes to job creation and retention, especially in rural Alaska. Three areas for potential job growth emerged from all four meetings:

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In an open letter to all Alaska Farmers, Bryce Wrigley states:

“Farmers and ranchers are thwarted by regulations that prohibit the growth and expansion of the industry. Agencies providing inspection services, veterinary services and the oversight of land issues are currently functions of several different agencies. **Locating these basic agricultural services in a single Department of Agriculture will increase efficiency by focusing all the resources on the mission of providing food for Alaska.”**

I see an Alaska Department of Agriculture and Food being able to provide economic growth in food and agriculture for our state in jobs with money being reinvested in Alaska. I see it working closely with the Department of Economic and Community Development with efforts of increasing the industry, not for industry sake but for making our state stronger by providing agricultural endeavors that look at food, fiber and fuel. My husband and I operate a game ranch with bison and elk. We have no problem selling our bison or elk. We sell as farm/gate sales off our ranches. A Department of Agriculture would work with ranches such as ours, to increase the red meat industry for our state. A reinstatement of a Department of Agriculture would promote a revitalization for Alaska's livestock industry. Not only would producers provide red meat, they would also provide jobs for Alaskans. Alaskan agriculture would head up endeavors such as alternative fuels like barley burner stoves, straw pellet stoves and biomass possibilities. This department would define and nurture economic opportunity, including technology development, in the food, fuel and fiber sectors. A department would support growth in Alaskan agriculture by serving as an advocate at the local, state and federal level; defining and nurturing economic opportunity and enhancing the stewardship of natural resources on agricultural land. We are truly a renewable resource.

It's also about food security. Maybe a person walking around Alaska wearing an FAA (Future Farmers of America) jacket doesn't get the same head turning as a jacket from a petroleum based company, but it should. It should be a real head-turner. Agricultural producers for our state would influence job creation, security and economic development. It would increase regional and local food security. It would support economically efficient and ecologically sustainable agriculture. Family friendly farming are not dirty words. We might get dirty farming but we are very friendly.

All other states except the largest and smallest (Alaska & Rhode Island), have a cabinet level department for agriculture. We had one too until, I believe the early 1960's, just prior to the oil pipeline. We are special, not having a cabinet level department of agriculture is not a good way to be special. North Dakota now surpasses us as an oil producing state, the boom has come and gone once again. It is time to apologize to farmers, ranchers, producers and agriculture operators around the state for putting them on the back burner as an economical viability, for taking their industry out of a cabinet level status and placing them as a division under DNR. Our forefathers never intended that. They knew that Alaska needed agriculture. They knew it was imperative as a state, to be able to feed, clothe and keep themselves warm was just as important as any gold that was sought after.

It is time to reinstate the Alaska Department of Agriculture. It is time to support the Alaska Department of Agriculture and Food, HB 191. Thank you. *Ruby Peck-Hollembaek*

Ronald S. Klein
3316 Knik Ave
Anchorage, Alaska 99517

March 26, 2012

Representative Eric Feige
Representative Paul Seaton
Co-Chairs, House Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Subject: Comments on House Bill 191 "An Act establishing a state department of agriculture and food and relating to its powers and duties; relating to the powers and duties of the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Department of Natural Resources; and providing for an effective date.

Dear Representatives Feige and Seaton:

I am commenting on HB 191 which is the subject of a House Resources Committee meeting scheduled for March 26, 2012. Please include my comments in the hearing record. I am traveling today and unable provide verbal testimony. I have strong interest in growing Alaska's food industry through the development of markets for local food and enhancing Alaska's food security. I believe Alaska's foods can also attract be attractive in the national and global market, as is the case with our seafood.

I retired in October as the State's Food Safety and Sanitation Program Manager. I am Past-President of the Association of Food and Drug Officials which represents state agricultural and health department food safety directors and program managers on a national level to promote uniform, safe food systems in the United States. Nationally, I am a food safety and emergency preparedness subject matter expert for academia and an international food protection training institute. I am also a management consultant working toward state and federal implementation of the federal Food Safety Management Act of 2011 (FSMA). Locally, I volunteer my time as a member of the Governing Board of the Alaska Food Policy Council and part of the effort to help develop a market for safe, healthy, local foods.

My comments are my own and do not represent my clients, employers or any organization I am associated with.

I caution against carving off food safety responsibilities which reside within the Department of Environmental Conservation and moving them to a new Department.

In January 2011, Congress passed the Food Safety Modernization Act, which has a significant impact on local, state, and federal food safety programs. HB 191 does not take into account changes at the federal level which have an impact on state regulatory programs and producers. The Act is fostering the development of an Integrated Safety System comprised of state and federal food and public health

laboratories, epidemiologists, inspectors and first responders. This integrated system is designed to leverage local, state and federal resources in order to provide for the development of preventive controls from farm to fork and to facilitate quick, coordinated response to foodborne outbreaks. State, local, and federal partners are developing unified work plans, coordinating inspections and developing program standards to assure uniformity and consistency across the nation for manufactured food, feed, dairy, shellfish and retail food programs.

National program standards require significant training investments to ensure that staff has the scientific, technical, and communication skills necessary to work with industry. Industry, having been bit by recalls and foodborne disease associated with products that include strawberries, leafy greens, sprouts, red meat, peppers, has been re-examining its preventive controls and is taking steps to work with regulators to beef-up preventive controls through alliances that focus on specific products, such as produce, and processes, such as low acid and acidified canning.

Alaska is ahead of the curve nationally because it already has an integrated food safety system. Alaska does not have the problem that the federal government has where you have one agency looking at meat products and another looking at seafood products which are being produced in the same plant. Alaska is fortunate to have the State Veterinarian, Environmental Health Laboratory, and the Food Safety and Sanitation Program in one division. By having an integrated system, Alaska is able to efficiently train staff, develop unified work plans, and manage field travel for inspections in rural Alaska to effectively use resources. For example, when a dairy sample needs to be taken in Delta, the Food Safety and Sanitation Program can send a food safety inspection officer to Delta to take the sample for the dairy program, rather than having the dairy program send someone from Wasilla to take the sample. Communication is also streamlined for effective food borne illness surveillance and effective response in the event of foodborne illness outbreak.

Creating a new department and moving some food safety responsibilities will not change regulatory requirements. In addition to creating unnecessary costs to the state to develop a new regulatory program, it will result in increased expenses and confusion for operators whose activities fall within the purview of DEC and the new department. Alaska and producers would be better off if additional resources are provided to UAF Cooperative Extension for technical assistance to help farmers and producers develop the ability to build their businesses.

Please feel free to contact me at 907-351-4184 or ron.klein@gci.net if you have any questions or would like additional information.

Sincerely,

Ronald S. Klein

From: House Resources
Subject: FW: Comment in re: HB 191

From: Louie Flora
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 8:58 AM
To: House Resources
Subject: FW: Comment in re: HB 191

From: LIO Delta Junction
Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 8:44 AM
To: Rep. Alan Dick; Rep. Berta Gardner; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Scott Kawasaki
Subject: Comment in re: HB 191

I was asked to forward these comments to the House Resources Committee. Thanks, Katrina

Katrina Skidmore

Legislative Information Officer
Delta Junction LIO
907.895.4236

It's time to ask the other 48 states to restructure their departments of agriculture and lower them to a division. If Alaska doesn't have a cabinet level department of agriculture and the politicians don't think we need it, other states must not need theirs' either. Do I believe this? Heck no! Up until the 1960's, we had a cabinet level department. Change happened then and the department was made into a division under the Department of Natural Resources. I believe this was just prior to pushing the pipeline through. We have to think of Alaska as an agricultural state, not just an oil, mining, timber and fishing state. Less than 1% of Alaska land is in private hands. We are special, not having a cabinet level department of agriculture, is not a good way to be special. Rhode Island and Alaska don't have a cabinet level, all other states do.

My opinion. Regards, Ruby

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Scott and Ruby Hollembaek

907/895-4715 (shop)

907/895-9810 (fax)

Game Ranch: www.bisonandelk.com

Community Gardens: www.wecangrowit.blogspot.com

Rhubarb: www.akrhubarb.blogspot.com

Food production and food security must become a top priority of the state. There is approximately a 3-9 day supply of food in the state. We ship in almost all the food we consume. We are dependent and vulnerable on a food distribution system that has been disrupted numerous times due to natural and man caused disasters

Alaska must prepare for future events, including the possibility of a widespread pandemic in the lower 48 that could bring transportation to a halt. The farmers of Alaska can provide a basic food supply capable of sustaining life during a prolonged disaster.

Farmers and ranchers are thwarted by regulations that prohibit the growth and expansion of the industry. Agencies providing inspection services, veterinary services and the oversight of land issues are currently functions of several different agencies. Locating these basic agricultural services in a single Department of Agriculture would increase efficiency by focusing resources on the mission of providing food for Alaska.

We propose a 10-year goal for the new Department of Agriculture to increase local food production to a level that will provide a basic, balanced, life sustaining diet for 90 days. We think that properly constituted, the new Department of Agriculture could be funded at about the same level that the Division of Agriculture currently is. Critical functions such as the inspection of agricultural products would be moved from DEC, where there has been little effort to address the onerous and unreasonable burdens of basic processing, to the new department which would conduct inspections, but with a focus on helping processors of agricultural products succeed so that new markets can be opened.

There is a lot of assistance that we who are on the ground can provide as this department is designed. All agencies become entrenched in bureaucracy and red tape that builds up over time. Sometimes it needs to be tipped upside down and empty the trash so the important things can be refocused on.

For nearly 3 decades, the morass of bureaucratic levels through which the Division of Agriculture must presently work has stonewalled budgets, needs, policies, and plans that could have worked to increase our food security. At all of those levels, initiatives have been ignored, not because they were not good initiatives, but because they did not meet the priorities of a larger DNR. The large and important responsibilities with which DNR must occupy itself simply do not allow an appropriate level of management for such a critical need as our food security.

We should have been growing our own food for the last 20 years, at least enough to insure that we could provide for ourselves when the barge didn't come in. Instead, we look back at 3 decades during which agriculture has consistently taken a back seat to other resource development. A dynamic agriculture industry

benefits Alaska in many more ways than just growing food. A vigorous agricultural policy could help resolve many of the social ills that exist in rural and remote Alaska. Agriculture connects people with the land and in the process, re-enthrones pride and industry and self-reliance. Would you rather entrust the future security of this state to a generation who had been raised to get up in the morning and do chores and work together or to a generation who spent the day with their pants around their knees and their hat on backward walking the malls because they had nothing to do? The decisions we make today determine where we will be in the future.

We wouldn't even be having this discussion of food security if we had stayed the course laid out 30 years ago. Ten years will pass whether or not we create this new department. But 10 years from now we will certainly look back and say either, "We wish we had done something," or "We sure are glad we did something".

I urge you to support the creation of a Dept of Agriculture, but let's do it right. We want it to be efficient to a level that doesn't currently exist in state agencies. We want it to be responsive, proactive, and serve the need of all Alaskans to have a secure supply of food. We want it to be empowered to work with other agencies to address educating the next generation of farmers and ranchers. We expect it to help the Dept of Health and Social Services and the Dept of Community and Economic Development fix the social breakdown in rural Alaska so that rural Alaskans no longer need to leave their home for the cities because they cannot find work.

Bryce Wrigley

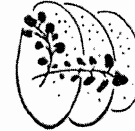
NELSON FARMS

Delta Junction, Alaska

PO Box 70888, Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
Ron Nelson
907-322-6877
rnelson@alaska.net



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March 24, 2012

Re: HB 191

Bryce Wrigley
Alaska State Farm Bureau President

Hello Bryce,

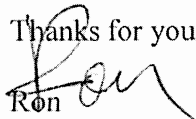
As you know, there have been considerable efforts by Private Industry, the Division of Agriculture, the University of Alaska and the Department of Commerce related to what is at this point a failed attempt to develop an export potato seed market with China.

This project might have been a success had a Department of Agriculture existed to better coordinate and manage this effort. This is a clear example of what happens without a clear lead agency....efforts gets splintered and money is wasted.

The Division of Agriculture employees are doing a good job....but I believe would be able to be more effective and do a better job as the clear lead agency for agriculture in Alaska.

I support your efforts related to establishing a Department of Agriculture.

Thanks for your hard work on this goal.


Ron

Ron Nelson
Nelson Farms
Delta Junction



Anthony "Tony" Nakazawa, Ph.D.
Professor of Economics

P.O. Box 210261
Anchorage, Alaska 99521
907-786-6300o
907-460-0825 c

March 7, 2012

To the State of Alaska - House Resource Committee

Re: Hearing on HB 191: An Act Establishing a State Department of Agriculture and Food

I am writing to voice my support for the reinstatement of a Department of Agriculture and Food within the Cabinet of the Governor of Alaska. I support Alaska Farm Bureau President Bryce Wrigley and the Alaska Farm Bureau (AFB) and their members in their support of this important issue.

A past Legislative Audit, in addressing the interests of *future Alaska*, made a recommendation that the current DNR Division of Agriculture would be better suited to serving *future Alaska* if it had the status of a Department of Agriculture.

Alaska is evolving.....individual Alaskans are now more than ever focusing on local food for local communities.....the efforts of the recent Alaska Food Policy Council and their focus on *Alaska Grown*.....the awareness that food security is an issue of growing concern given the singular points of entry from the lower-48 – a prolonged closure of the Port of Anchorage and the Ted Stevens International Airport as well as road access would leave the majority of Alaska at significant peril.....and other concerns suggest *that the time has come!*

AFB President Wrigley says it best, “....we continue to see little progress because DNR is preoccupied with oil and gas. Meanwhile, our food production capability languishes for lack of support. It takes time to develop a local food system to support our state - time that is surely and steadily slipping away. Not only are we in danger of losing our agriculture, we are about to lose the farming resources needed by the next generation of farmers.”

I very much concur with AFB President Wrigley in his above summary of the issue. The cost to establish another seat at the Governor's cabinet would be minor in consideration of the opportunity cost to all Alaskans of the “**do nothing alternative**” which I most definitely do not support.

Thank you for considering my comments on this vital matter.

Sincerely,

Anthony "Tony" Nakazawa



HB 191 Support

Thursday, March 22, 2012 1:32 PM

From: "Cater Alaska" <info@cateralaska.com>

To: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

Mr. Bryce Wrigley;

I support this bill and would like to see the reinstatement of a Division of Agriculture here in Alaska. For the best interest of all of our local sustainability and complete farming and agriculture needs, this bill is well supported by myself and my family. Please consider my name as a true advocate for this request.

Thank you,
Kirsten Pedersen, Wasilla

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Re: HB-191 Hearing Monday

Thursday, March 22, 2012 11:59 PM

From: "sandi schultz" <sandischultz@starband.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

I support HB 191. We need a Department of Agriculture to benefit farmers and consumers. This bill would bring all ag-related services together to better serve the producer and the consumer. sandi

Dare to be imperfect and one day there will tug at your sleeve a soulmate.
~Robert Brault

From: Jane Hamilton

Sent: Thursday, March 22, 2012 1:06 PM

To: undisclosed recipients:

Subject: HB-191 Hearing Monday

Alaska State Farm Bureau President Bryce Wrigley will be testifying during the House Resources committee hearing on Monday, March 26th. The hearing is scheduled for 1:00 P.M.

If you'd like to support the bill, please send an e-mail to the Farm Bureau executive director at janehamilton99737@yahoo.com by noon this Saturday if you have not already done so. Your statement need not be lengthy, a sentence or two will make a significant difference.

If you'd like to testify before the committee on Monday, please contact your local LIO Office. It's best to let them know that you'd like to testify ahead of time so they will be set up for you.

HB-191, establishing a Department of Agriculture and Food, was introduced by Representative Steve Thompson and is co-sponsored by Reps. Kerttula, Tuck, Lynn, Dick, Miller and Wilson. Currently, statutes and regulations that govern food, food products, land sales, loans land development and livestock are in multiple Departments. HB-191 would bring them together in one department. It's interesting to note that in 1947, the Territory of Alaska had a Department of Agriculture. Agriculture was later made a Division and put in the Department of Natural Resources. This bill would actually be re-instating what we used to have. Alaska and Rhode Island are now the only two states that do not have a Department of Agriculture.

Courses from France for AG degree via Quentin Idrac

Friday, March 16, 2012 11:08 AM

From: "Ruby Peck-Hollembaek" <rhubarb99737@gmail.com>

To: "Carol Lewis" <celews@alaska.edu>, "Jan Rowell" <Jan.Rowell@alaska.edu>, "Craig Gerlach" <scgerlach@alaska.edu>, "Milan Shipka" <mpshipka@alaska.edu>, "CES Delta" <cmroden@alaska.edu>

Cc: "Coghill, John (LAA)" <senator_john_coghill@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Reggie Joule" <Rep_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us>, "Senator Joe Paskvan" <Senator_Joe_Paskvan@legis.state.ak.us>, "Senator Joe Thomas" <Senator_Joe_Thomas@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Alan Dick" <Rep_Alain_Dick@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Eric Fiege" <Rep_Eric_Fiege@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. David Guttenberg" <Rep_David_Guttenberg@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Scott Kawasaki" <Rep_Scott_Kawasaki@legis.state.ak.us>, "rep_bob_miller" <rep_bob_miller@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Bill Stoltze" <Rep_Bill_Stoltze@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Steve Thompson" <Rep_Steve_Thompson@legis.state.ak.us>, "Rep. Tammie Wilson" <Rep_Tammie_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us>

Bcc: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

1 File (40KB)



courses.pun

I was able to retrieve our exchange student, Quentin's course schedule.
I would love to see UAF be the university in Alaska that would offer such.
Thanks again.
Go UAF!

1. I would also envision that coursework and lectures might be available online for students. The tv channel 360 North often has lectures presented from UAS. I would hope that UAF could offer the same in regards to Alaska ag, afterall UAF is a lands grant college as we all know.
2. On another note, I see that TCC presenter gave an excellent grower school presentation. This might be incorporated too along with the CES Master Gardner's Course Curriculum. What great sources we already have, blueberry study from Pat Holloway, etc.
3. Here is the link <https://www.facebook.com/StoreOutside> in regards to Alaska's Intertribal Health...Gary Ferguson.
4. Also: Kineen's site: <http://fresh49.com/>
5. I envision a 30 minute weekly segment called something like "Sow Alaska"...not like a hog ;), but rather what we reap and sow. This 30 min. program would feature harvests of grown and wild food from around the state and "how to prepare it". Gary's is already doing segments in regards to traditional foods. KUAC would be a great station to present this.

Great to see everyone and I like that SARE has movement with their grassroots endeavors such as availability of land for people who want to farm but can't afford to buy a piece of land, greenhouse productions, community gardens, farmers' markets, barley flour, arctic chamomile, legislative interest in agriculture/food-again. We are only 1 of 2 states who do not have a cabinet level department of agriculture. Very sad considering everything. I promote the reinstatement of a cabinet level Department of Agriculture. HB 24 is a good initiative. Thank you. Ruby



Scott and Ruby Hollembaek
907/895-4715 (shop)
907/895-9810 (fax)

Game Ranch: www.bisonandelk.com
Community Gardens: www.wecangrowit.blogspot.com
Rhubarb: www.akrhubarb.blogspot.com

Palmer Produce

4255 S. McKechnie Road

Palmer, Alaska

99645-9708

Phone (907) 745-3875 Office (907) 232-8253 Cell

E-mail: produce@att.net

**House Natural Resources Committee
HB191 DEPARTMENT of Agriculture Hearing
Paul A. Huppert Testimony Statement**

As a matter of introduction to my agricultural experience, after farming in Yakima Valley Washington, I moved with my family to Alaska and homesteaded in the MatSu Valley. We have farmed potatoes, vegetables and hay. We established Palmer Produce for our product whole sale marketing, as well as for other Producer's products. We have dealt with various facets of Alaskan agricultural production and marketing for over 50 years.

I. Comprehensive Plan for Alaskan Agriculture Development

There isn't one and there hasn't been one for years and years under the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). No industry can achieve progress without a viable plan in place.

A. Agriculture Industry Participation

It is imperative that the agriculture industry be thoroughly involved in any planning for Alaskan agricultural development. Additionally, planning should include the development of the applicable budget requirements.

The planning process is never complete. Any plan must be flexible and on-going to meet ever-changing needs. Once a plan is developed, the industry must continue to be involved through an open door policy. The Division of Agriculture under DNR has shut out the very industry they are supposed to serve.

B. Legislative Participation

Legislative participation is important so that they can be well informed as to the industry's input. Alaskan agriculture needs a "Department" of its own that is focused on a viable plan to actually develop Alaskan agriculture's potential.

II. Agricultural Revolving Loan Fund (ARLF)

The ARLF is critical to the funding of any development of agriculture as Private Banks do not give a high priority to Ag lending. DNR and the Division of Agriculture have essentially ignored the ARLF for years with no forward planning whatsoever.

A. Recapitalization

With essentially no more capital assets to liquidate, the ARLF funds are depleting. The fund needs reorganization that includes professional financial management prior to any recapitalization.

B. Loan Authority

I don't believe that the Board of Agriculture & Conservation (BAC) should sit as the ARLF Loan Committee. My experience on Bank Boards and as past Chairman of Commercial Fishing & Agriculture Bank (CFAB) is that there must be a Loan Committee as an independent unit made up of professional personnel within the organization who follow Statutory and Regulatory requirements. Additionally, regularly scheduled audits should be mandatory.

III. Agricultural Lands

Agriculture is not a priority for DNR and they have stymied ag land sales and development for years and years. We need a "Department" level of priority with a long term vision and focus for the future of Alaskan agriculture.

A. Agriculture Land Covenants

Public lands, both State and Federal, that could be classified as agricultural in Alaska is a very small percentage. Lands that meet ag classification should be classified for future needs. It is of primary importance to retain agricultural covenants on these ag lands for future generations.

Agriculture lands everywhere, not just in Alaska, had a rough time in their beginning development years. The Great Plains and the large irrigation projects, which I was involved in after WW II, had their detractors. Everyone who eats is fortunate that they still progressed forward through those tough times. Today, with our population, we need that continued production. In looking back, the next one hundred years will go by in the blink of an eye.

B. Agriculture Land Sales

There should be a review of current ag land inventory and it be made available to those interested in farming. Additionally, there should be a plan for future ag land inventory with surveys, appraisals, proper access, plus applicable budget support.

IV. Research

There isn't any, at least not any research that actually applies to truly developing Alaskan agriculture. There has been a disconnect between the Division of Agriculture Plant Material Center (PMC) and the University of Alaska for years under DNR.

A. New Crops

We are in desperate need of continued research for the future development of Alaskan agriculture. This is more critical than ever before with the loss of the Federal Arctic Research Services (ARS).

Vegetable seed production is a very high value crop. As an example, spinach seed sells for \$1,800.00 per lb. in the lower 48 States. They have developed strains so they won't bolt; consequently, they have a problem getting seed. We had Harris Moran Seed Co. run trials on our farm. They discovered that due to our summer's long light, spinach would bolt and yield high quantities of seed. Our problem was getting it dry at the time of harvest; however, I believe we could use dryers.

Another example is that we can raise a gourmet product with fresh frozen peas but it takes 15,000 acres to put in a pea processing plant. I firmly believe Peas could be raised in the Delta area. The good part of this is that peas can be mechanically harvested and processed. We have already done the research on Peas. We just need a plan and progress forward.

V. Plant Material Center (PMC)

The Division of Agriculture's Plant Material Center is stuck in a 30-year time warp based on its origination. It's only priority seems to be re-vegetation. It is not responsive and is shut off from the agricultural industry's true development needs as a result of lack of direction and leadership under DNR.

A. Seed Potato Program

The Division of Agriculture has been aware of the most dreaded of potato diseases bacterial ring rot (BRR) in the MatSu Valley since at least 2008 when it was identified on the State's own Department of Corrections Pt. Mackenzie farm. However, the Division of Agriculture has taken no measures to eradicate the disease. There is zero tolerance for this potato disease in the lower 48 and the rest of the world.

The Division's Seed Potato Program promotes and suggests the use of Alaska certified potato seed, rather than imported seed, as a means to avoid introducing disease to Alaska. First, there is insufficient quantity of certified seed potatoes available in Alaska for commercial potato producers and retailers. Second, the credibility of Alaska's own potato seed certification program is a concern if the Division of Agriculture has known of the potato ring rot disease incidents for years and appears to have taken no measures to address it.

What is the State going to do about encouraging production of sufficient quantities of *quality* certified seed potatoes for Alaskan potato producers? What is the State going to do about eradicating the bacterial potato ring rot disease in Alaska? What is the State going to do about instilling confidence in the Alaska Potato Seed Certification Program? This is another example of the low priority given the Alaskan agriculture industry under DNR and the desperate need for a “Department” management level.

B. Export Crops

Alaska is the only State that is able to export seed potatoes to China. However, this is in jeopardy when we have potato bacterial ring rot in our own back yard.

It is Nationally a standard responsibility for a “Department” of Agriculture to protect the health of food produced and to protect the reputation of what we produce.

Alaska can produce high value vegetable seed and compete on the world market with a “Department” of Agriculture leading the way.

VI. Ethics/Opens Meetings Act/Conflict of Interest

It is important that current laws regarding Ethics, Open Meetings Act and Conflicts of Interest be adhered to and enforced by State Department of Law. DNR has been invisible and silent in this regard when it comes to providing leadership and oversight of the Division of Agriculture and the Board of Agriculture.

VII. Conclusion

There have been several audits, followed by several promises, for changes by a number of DNR Commissioners & Deputy Commissioners, along with Division of Agriculture Directors, that have never come to pass. The 2002 Legislative Division of Agriculture Audit Conclusion still applies today and supports HB191 creating an Alaska DEPARTMENT of Agriculture.

“Since our last audit, the division has made very little progress in advancing agriculture. In fact, we found that the lack of innovative leadership is actually hindering the expansion of Alaska agriculture. **The Legislature should statutorily restructure services to agriculture for a more aggressive pursuit of distinctive Alaskan opportunities.**”

I support HB191 that creates a “Department” of Agriculture to raise it to a cabinet level that is necessary for Alaskan agriculture’s development. A “Department” of Agriculture’s qualified Commissioner’s #1 priority will be to address Alaskan agriculture issues that have mentioned and many, many more. DNR and the Division of Agriculture have had over 50 years, and failed, to bring Alaskan agriculture to a successful level.



HB-191 Hearing

Thursday, March 22, 2012 9:51 PM

From: "Charlotte Brady" <charlotwlb9@aol.com>

To: "janehamilton99737@yahoo.com" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Ms. Hamilton,

I support this bill and would like to see the reinstatement of a Division of Agriculture here in Alaska. For the best interest of all of our local sustainability and complete farming and agriculture needs, this bill is well supported by myself and my family. Please consider my name as a true advocate for this request.

Thank you,
Charlotte Brady, Wasilla, AK



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 3:56 PM

From: "Rita Jo" <ritajo@alaskahardy.com>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Jane here's my 2 cents on this issue

Bryce Wrigley, President
Alaska Farm Bureau

Dear Mr. Wrigley

I appreciate any work you do that furthers the option and or successful action that produces a Department of Agriculture. It is quite the trend now to grow your own food, and with over 150 high tunnels constructed in the last 3 years in our area, folks are very serious about increasing their production to feed themselves and extended families. They are all new growers in need of guidance in farming. Many of these new growers are anticipating have produce for Farmer's Market and for local grocery stores as well as local restaurants.

The newest industry to hit Alaska, growing peony for the cut flower market, is much further along than any of us ever thought would happen this quickly. Just this past month Fairbanks had their second session to help new growers and had over 40 attend. This offering was as a result of the close out of a New Growers session at the Alaska Peony Growers Conference in January where many were turned down due to room capacity and fire marshal rules. The conference itself was attended by 120 folks. The summer conference also had great attendance.

The Matanuska Valley peony growers are forming a regional group and have again over 40 folks getting together at different times to discuss possibilities.

Here on the Kenai Peninsula, we have over 50,000 cuts for this year's market at a minimum and probably triple that for next year. All these new growers are in need of advice. I am in support of HB 191 and would be more than willing to talk and answer questions about the peony industry to anyone interested.

Rita Jo Shultz
907 235-4969
Fritz Creek Gardens
ritajo@alaskahardy.com
www.alaskahardy.com
Alaska Hardy Peony LLC
ritajo@alaskahardypeony.com
www.alaskahardypeony.com
Box 15226, Fritz Creek, AK 99603

----- Original Message -----

From: Jane Hamilton

To: undisclosed recipients:

Sent: Tuesday, March 06, 2012 10:35 AM

Subject: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

--- On Tue, 3/6/12, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:

6 March 2012

In reference to HB 191,

The general public in the Alaskan interior see agriculture as a boutique industry. Most people do not know the capabilities of local agriculture is capable of going far beyond an urban farmers market. The Alaska DNR has done very little to change or enhance agriculture's image or capabilities.

The current situation awareness and danger of a local food and fuel supply slipping away is evident. HB 191 could change the stagnation or decline of agriculture in the state of Alaska.

Thanks,

Gar Blackledge
Delta Junction, Alaska



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 11:14 AM

From: "geobk@mtaonline.net" <geobk@mtaonline.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Jane-I am in favor of a Department of Agriculture. I worked there for 12 years. George Crowther

--- janehamilton99737@yahoo.com wrote:

From: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

To: undisclosed recipients: ;

Subject: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Date: Tue, 6 Mar 2012 11:36:46 -0800 (PST)

--- On Tue, 3/6/12, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Subject: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Date: Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 9:51 AM

Below you will find a letter from Alaska Farm Bureau State President Bryce Wrigley. He is requesting a statement, comments, or even a one line comment in support of the passage of HB 191 which will reinstate a Department of Agriculture. Please send them to the Alaska Farm Bureau Office at PO Box 760 Delta Junction, AK 99737 or to me at my e-mail address - janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

We encourage you to forward this to others who may not be Farm Bureau members.

Please send your comments or statements as soon as possible. Thanks.

Hello Farm Bureau Members-

It has long been the priority of the Alaska Farm Bureau to promote and develop a dynamic agriculture industry in Alaska. HB 191, the bill to reinstate a Department of Agriculture, is the vehicle we are supporting to accomplish this because it will elevate agriculture to a higher level within government and allow for better coordination and development of our food production.



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 6:40 PM

From: "gaylewind@juno.com" <gaylewind@juno.com>

To: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

Jane,
Both Jim and I are very much in support of the Department of Agriculture. We totally concur with Bryce's comments.

Jim and Gayle Eastwood

53 Year Old Mom Looks 33

The Stunning Results of Her Wrinkle Trick Has Botox Doctors Worried

<http://thirdpartyoffers.juno.com/TGL3131/4f56d8ec4ccbb1accf9fst04vuc>



Re: Fw: HB-191 correction

Thursday, March 8, 2012 11:39 AM

From: "jbbush@mtaonline.net" <jbbush@mtaonline.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Bushes Bunches Farm is very much in support of HB191. Alaska's agriculture is finally beginning to be noticed worldwide, and we need to develop an organization that promotes agriculture to the enth degree. Not unlike the Copper River Salmon. Focus on agriculture. We need a Department of Agriculture ASAP. Had no idea it had been since territorial days. And I lived here when it was still a territory, so I know how long its been.

Sincerely,
Victoria Bush

--- janehamilton99737@yahoo.com wrote:

From: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

To: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Subject: Fw: HB-191 correction

Date: Tue, 6 Mar 2012 20:10:47 -0800 (PST)

--- On Tue, 3/6/12, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Subject: HB-191 correction

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Date: Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 7:09 PM

Thanks to those of you who have sent in your comments and letters in support for HB 191.

I'd like to regretfully point out that I spelled my own name incorrectly when I gave you my e-mail address earlier today. The correct address is:

janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

We are hopeful that we will be hearing from more of you soon!



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 7:18 PM

From: "Marlene or John Wenger" <marwen@cvinternet.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

As a farmer and business owner, I am in support of HB 191 which will
reinstate a Dept
of agriculture.
John Wenger



HB 191

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 7:08 PM

From: "Shirlene Wrigley" <swrigley@alaska.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Dear Jane,

I do support HB 191 in reinstating the Department of Agriculture. I feel the time has come to support our food source in the state of Alaska. Considering the economy of our country the local food supply to sustain ourselves is very important to consider and plan for.

I do believe that we would have better results guiding our own industry through the Department of Agriculture from the prospect of the farmers than going through the DNR. Our goal is to grow enough food in our state to sustain ourselves and not totally rely on the transportation system from the lower 48.

Sincerely,

Rex Wrigley

Re: HB 191, Establishing a State Department of Agriculture and Food

I herewith extend my full support of HB 191. It is deeply disappointing to see that this important legislation, that enjoys considerable Legislative support, has never been heard in House Resources this year. It was sent to Resources last year.

In the dramatic growth of all forms of agriculture in Alaska, not least the promising and lucrative Peony business, it is high time, that Agriculture receive the state support it so desperately needs.

Please support HB 191.

Thank you,

Milli Martin
P.O. Box 2652
Homer, AK 99603
907-235-6652
Email: millimom@xyz.net



Support of Dept. of Agriculture

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 12:09 PM

From: "John Dart" <jdart@alaska.com>

To: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

Dear Ms. Hamilton:

As a farmer and Farm Bureau member, I support the establishment of a Alaska Department of Agriculture. We are at a crossroad to expanding agriculture in the State and need a better separate system. Our needs will always fall to the wayside, as DNR simply doesn't have the time, funding, or expertise to fulfill all of the needs of a diversified agriculture here in our vast State.

Sincerely,

John Robert Dart
Farmer
Dart-AM Farms, LLC
P.O. Box 84
Manley Hot Springs, Alaska 99756



HB 191

Tuesday, March 6, 2012 7:52 PM

From: "Craig and Kathy Baker" <grayowl@mtaonline.net>

To: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

Craig and Kathy Baker own and operate Gray Owl Farm, a greenhouse and sod business in the Mat-Su Valley. We were honored as the 2011 State Fair Farm Family of the Year. We have been associated with Alaskan agriculture since the Point MacKenzie Dairy Project in 1984 where Craig was a farm manager. We completely support the reinstatement of the Department of Agriculture in the State of Alaska. The Governor's recent programs to promote disaster preparedness is in perfect keeping with the promotion of a local food supply and self sufficiency. A department within the government would help insure that great ideas for Alaska's food supply are heard. Agriculture is a stand-alone, important industry that needs to be independent of the Department of Natural Resources. We appreciate your consideration and actively support HB 191.

Sincerely,

Craig & Kathy Baker

Gray Owl Farm

PO Box 2976

Palmer, Alaska 99645

907-745-0353



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Thursday, March 8, 2012 10:22 AM

From: "Viola Amberg" <alaska.aite@gmail.com>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

President Bryce,

Alaskans cannot eat crude oil - nor do we mine for food.

My name is Viola Amberg, and I live at 1335 Skyline Drive, Fairbanks, AK 99712 and we own a 400 acre farm parcel in the Copper Center area. I would like to voice my support for House Bill 191.

In March of 2011, Rep. Steve Thompson sponsored HB 191, a bill that would allow Alaskan residents to focus appropriate state resources on food production and security. HB 191 is good for all Alaskans.

The Department of Natural Resources has served its purpose; DNR has successfully fostered the growth of Alaskan agriculture; however, Alaska is now in a position to manage a dedicated department - specifically designed to further advance our state's agriculture potential.

At one time, DNR's Division of Agriculture made sense; however, on July 15, 1957 - Alaska's first major, commercial oil discovery took place... and a lot has changed since then. "Oil and Gas" have consumed the forefront of DNR's attention, leaving Alaskan Agriculture in its wake.

The dynamics of our state has changed, and Alaska's administration is obligated to change along with it.

Alaska is ready for the Agriculture "sub" Division to become what it was intentionally designed to be - the Alaska Department of Agriculture. Let's look to the future and secure Alaska's next generation's resources.

Sincerely,

Viola L. Amberg
violaamberg@gmail.com

On Tue, Mar 6, 2012 at 10:36 AM, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:

--- On Tue, 3/6/12, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:

From: Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>
Subject: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support
To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>
Date: Tuesday, March 6, 2012, 9:51 AM

Below you will find a letter from Alaska Farm Bureau State President Bryce Wrigley. He is requesting a statement, comments, or even a one line comment in support of the passage of HB 191 which will reinstate a Department of Agriculture. Please send them to the Alaska Farm Bureau Office at PO Box 760 Delta Junction, AK 99737 or to me at my e-mail address - janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

**HB 191**

Thursday, March 8, 2012 8:38 PM

From: "Charles Knight" <cknight.alaska@gmail.com>**To:** "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

Alaska Farm Bureau

I support HB 191 to reinstate a Department of Agriculture. It is interesting to live in a country that has vast reserves of gas and oil, yet much of our fuel is imported from foreign countries (we blame that on Federal restrictions). At the same time, we live in a state with millions of acres of land with agricultural potential, and we import over 95% of our food. That is not due to Federal restrictions, but due to the fact that the Department of Natural Resources is much more interested in exporting gas and oil than they are in building communities and providing a secure food supply for Alaska residents. We need a Department of Agriculture to champion the development of renewable resources through agricultural production and processing.

Charles Knight
Farm Bureau Member



Re: HB 191 Letters of Support

Monday, March 19, 2012 2:39 PM

From: "Carmen DeVilbiss" <windyriverfarm@gmail.com>
To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

I would like to send a note of support for HB 191 and encourage the passage of this bill to further benefit the people of the state of Alaska and help our state to become more food independent.
We as farmers need help removing the hurdles of bureaucracy that impede our industry and I think re-instating a Department of Agriculture would give us a voice with some influence in making that happen.
Sincerely, Gerald DeVilbiss

On Mon, Mar 12, 2012 at 2:43 PM, Jane Hamilton <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com> wrote:
Just a reminder to send in your letters or a one line sentence of support for HB 191 which will re-instate a Department of Agriculture.

We have received quite a few letters and comments from our membership. Marlene Wenger and Rex Wrigley are the only two Board members who have sent them to date.

Bryce's letter outlining the reasons for the request is attached. Please remind your members to send their comments as well. The more we have, the better the impact we will have during the House Resource Committee hearing.



HB 191

Thursday, March 22, 2012 7:58 AM

From: "Ruby Peck-Hollembaek" <rhubarb99737@gmail.com>

Bcc: janehamilton99737@yahoo.com

It's time to ask the other 48 states to restructure their departments of agriculture and lower them to a division. If Alaska doesn't have a cabinet level department of agriculture and the politicians don't think we need it, other states must not need theirs' either. Do I believe this? Heck no! Up until the 1960's, we had a cabinet level department. Change happened then and the department was made into a division under the Department of Natural Resources. I believe this was just prior to pushing the pipeline through. We have to think of Alaska as an agricultural state, not just an oil, mining, timber and fishing state. Less than 1% of Alaska land is in private hands. We are special, not having a cabinet level department of agriculture, is not a good way to be special. Rhode Island and Alaska don't have a cabinet level, all other states do.

My opinion. Regards, Ruby

--

Scott and Ruby Hollembaek

907/895-4715 (shop)

907/895-9810 (fax)

Game Ranch: www.bisonandelk.com

Community Gardens: www.wecangrowit.blogspot.com

Rhubarb: www.akrhubarb.blogspot.com



Re: AK Farm Bureau Requesting Your Support

Wednesday, March 7, 2012 7:13 PM

From: "Marlene or John Wenger" <marwen@cvinternet.net>

To: "Jane Hamilton" <janehamilton99737@yahoo.com>

As the Director for the Copper River Valley Farm Bureau I am in support of HB 191 which will reinstate a Dept of Agriculture.
Marlene Wenger
