



CENTRAL BERING SEA FISHERMEN'S ASSOCIATION

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March 28, 2014

Co-chairs of Senate Finance
Senator Kelly, State Capitol Room 516
Senator Meyer, State Capitol Room 518

Dear Senator:

The Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association (CBSFA) is writing in support of the legislative funding request of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery for blue and red king crab enhancement. CBSFA is the Community Development Quota (CDQ) entity for St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs, with the responsibility to develop the fisheries resources and economy of the region for the benefit of the community. As such, we have been a supporter since the beginning of the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRB) program in its efforts to understand and restore Pribilof Island Blue King Crab stocks.

Kodiak Red King Crab and the Pribilof Island Blue King Crab populations are at a long-term low and continue to decline. Commercial fisheries for these species have been closed for two decades, and personal use and subsistence fisheries severely limited, yet the declines persist and worsen. In response to these declines the AKCRRAB program was formed in 2006 to research king crab life cycles, and discover whether out-stocking of juvenile crabs may be a tool to help bring back these once-important species.

The funding for this project will continue its efforts over the last seven years to develop the technology and conduct the science necessary for a successful program. In 2013 the first out-stocking experiment for red king crab was conducted near Old Harbor, Kodiak. Additional small scale releases are scheduled for 2014 and 2015.

AKCRRAB is expanding its efforts in the Pribilof Islands, and partnering with the Tribal Government of St. Paul to identify proper habitat for juvenile blue king crab. The goal is to perform out-stocking experiments in the region and measure their success. AKCRRAB is also sponsoring ongoing genetic work on both red and blue king crab stocks in the Gulf and the Bering Sea.

The Alutiq Pride Hatchery in Seward has provided the facility and culturing expertise for the AKCRRAB program since its inception, and is an essential part of the effort to improve techniques and provide juveniles for research and out-stocking.

Because we on St. Paul Island depend completely on our fisheries and the economy surrounding them, it is important we support the continuance of the hatchery's work and the success of AKCRRAB.

Sincerely,

Phillip Lestenkof, President