



March 31, 2017

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801
Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

RE: Support for SB 95 – Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund

Dear Senator Stevens:

On behalf of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, I would like to express support for SB 95, which amends the Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund to more effectively and fully deploy an important asset to develop the Mariculture industry by addressing obstacles in seed supply.

As an advocate for over 40 Southwest Alaska communities with marine based economies, SWAMC views this proposal as critical in making these communities sustainable. While some of the richest fishery, marine, and shellfish resources in the world lie on our doorstep, SWAMC sees an opportunity to build on this bounty by increasing Mariculture activity and businesses. We see Mariculture as a healthy, viable economic engine for our coastal communities that will allow individuals to access a new and growing opportunity. Furthermore, coastal residents know the tides, weather, environment, and other critical components for overseeing and managing the pristine water columns that will feed a successful Mariculture industry.

Access to seed is necessary for farmers to start and expand businesses and makes shellfish and seaweed/kelp hatcheries a critical piece of the infrastructure for this promising industry. Viable financing options are necessary to put these hatcheries on a stable footing as the industry grows and is eventually able to support the infrastructure on its own. Southwest Alaska coastal residents want to live and support their families and contribute to sustainable economies and coastal entrepreneurs want need access to capital to start and grow new businesses.

SWAMC's vision to promote vibrant and livable communities in Southwest Alaska is tied to initiatives to fully develop a Mariculture industry which will create jobs, maintain or improve the environment, and increase access to valuable resources. I look forward to collaborating with you on your efforts to support this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas B. Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Doug Griffin
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Mia Costello, Chair, Senate Labor and Commerce Committee