

Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Representative Daniel Ortiz
State Capitol, Room 513
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Ph: 907-465-3824
Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov

RE: Support for HB 128 – shellfish enhancement

Dear Representative Ortiz,

February 24, 2017

The Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force) would like to express support for HB 128. ***The Task Force recognizes that HB 128 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.***

At the request of industry and communities, Governor Walker established the Task Force by [Administrative Order #280](#). The Governor recognized that a developed mariculture industry will have economic, environmental, cultural, industrial and food security benefits to Alaskans. Members of the Task Force were appointed in May, 2016. The Governor's directive to the Task Force is to provide recommendations for a comprehensive plan ***to develop a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities***. The Task Force must complete its work by March 1, 2018.

The Task Force would like to highlight that we are using the following guiding principles in our work to develop the mariculture industry:

- 1) Mariculture is defined as enhancement of wild fisheries and aquatic farming of shellfish and aquatic plants. Mariculture does not include finfish farming, which is not allowed in Alaska.
- 2) The development of the mariculture industry will be compatible with Alaska's reputation as a world leader in responsible and sustainable management of its seafood resources.
- 3) The development of the mariculture industry will be stakeholder-driven.
- 4) The development of the mariculture industry will coordinate and integrate with those entities conducting ocean monitoring in order to inform research and management of changing ocean conditions.

HB 128 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska. HB 128 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can allow for and manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and hatcheries. This would allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, razor clams, or others. ***This framework (HB 128) is absolutely necessary to continue moving forward with the development of mariculture related to wild shellfish enhancement.***

Thank you for sponsoring this important legislation. ***The Task Force supports HB 128 and appreciates your proactive role in introducing the legislation.*** If there are any questions, you may contact members of the [Task Force](#).

Sincerely,

Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc:

Representative Stutes, Chair, House Fisheries Committee: Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov

Reid Harris, Staff, House Fisheries Committee: Reid.Harris@akleg.gov