



Southwest Alaska Conference

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Alaska Peninsula
Aleutian Chain
Bristol Bay
Kodiak Island
Pribilof Islands

March 4, 2017

Representative Dan Ortiz
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov

Re: Support for HB 128 – Shellfish Enhancement

Dear Representative Ortiz:

On behalf of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, I would like to express support for HB 128 which creates a framework to manage and develop shellfish fishery enhancement which will benefit the state's economy by providing a method to increase the available harvest of shellfish for public use in an environmentally safe manner.

As a representative of 40+ marine economies of Southwest Alaska, opportunity for developing available resources is critical to sustainable economies. While some of the richest waters in the world lie at our doorsteps, the necessary management measures meant to protect the long-term viability of the resource has led to reduced opportunity, particularly for the crab industry. This legislation will provide a regulatory framework to manage crab fishery enhancement, or other species of shellfish, if pursued by interested stakeholders. This could allow for additional fishing opportunity and crab processing while maintaining stocks at healthy levels. We see mariculture as a healthy, viable economic model for the coastal communities that will allow individuals to once again access a new and growing opportunity with limited up-front restrictions.

SWAMC's vision, to promote vibrant and livable communities across Southwest Alaska, is fully realized by a fully developed mariculture industry which creates jobs, improves the natural environment and improves access to usable resources. I look forward to collaborating with your efforts to support this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas B. Griffin". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Doug Griffin,
Executive Director, SWAMC