

# MADE IN ALASKA MARICULTURE

To: Representative Dan Ortiz  
State capitol Room 513, Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907-465-3824  
[Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Daniel.Ortiz@akleg.gov)

***RE: Support for HB 41 – shellfish enhancement & ASMI marketing aquatic farm products***

Dear Representative Ortiz,

February 11, 2021

On behalf of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force), I would like to express strong support for House Bill 41, which will accomplish two priority recommendations of the Task Force, as a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

***The Task Force believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster,*** and passage of HB 41 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. The Task Force members recognize the difficult circumstances that cut short the 2020 legislative session in which a committee substitute version of HB 41 was in its final committee of referral and poised for passage. We thank you for introducing the bill again.

In 2016, Governor Walker established and appointed members to the Task Force by [Administrative Order No.280](#), and in 2018, the Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in order to accelerate the development of mariculture - the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) (attached is a [brief summary](#)). The Task Force was re-authorized in 2018 to continue to work towards implementation of the Plan. Upon his election, Governor Dunleavy kept the Task Force in place, because he shares the vision of what mariculture could mean to the state: jobs and opportunities.

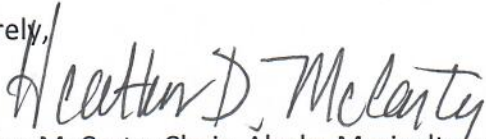
HB 41 has broad stakeholder support and will accomplish two priority recommendations contained within the statewide comprehensive plan. More specifically, HB 41 will accomplish the following:

- 1) allow for shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration; and
- 2) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow marketing of aquatic farm products.

After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope and a path to economic recovery. The Task Force strongly believes that mariculture can be part of the economic recovery and HB 41 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment – a bright spot on the horizon.

Thank you for your consideration of this mariculture bill as part of a package of legislation that creates and supports economic activity for Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Heather D. McCarty". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'H' and 'M'.

Heather McCarty, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc: Alaska Mariculture Task Force

IN BRIEF

# Alaska Mariculture Development Plan

2018



*"Aquatic plants and shellfish present a significant and sustainable economic opportunity for coastal Alaska communities....I support this comprehensive plan and commit the State of Alaska to work in partnership with stakeholders and agencies toward its implementation."*

—Governor Bill Walker

*"This plan is intended to increase profitability, expand participation, and provide coordination....the Task Force members remain committed and are enthusiastic about expanding Alaska's mariculture industry."*

—Alaska Mariculture Task Force





## What is Mariculture?

Enhancement, restoration, and farming of shellfish (marine invertebrates) and seaweeds (macroalgae). Finfish farming is not legal in Alaska waters, and therefore, it is not considered in this report.

## Why Mariculture?

### **Economic Benefits**

- 🌀 Adds jobs in primary, secondary, and support sectors.
- 🌀 Adds money and commerce flowing through coastal communities.
- 🌀 Increases trade domestically and internationally.

### **Environmental Benefits**

- 🌀 Shellfish filter and clean the water allowing light to penetrate.
- 🌀 Shellfish and seaweed remove excess nutrients.
- 🌀 Shellfish and seaweed provide essential habitat and support diverse ecosystems.
- 🌀 Shellfish and seaweed help mitigate ocean acidification in local waters.

### **Cultural Benefits**

- 🌀 Complements existing traditions and customs in coastal communities.
- 🌀 Complements existing skill sets.

This synopsis of the 2018 Alaska Mariculture Development Plan presents results of a two-year planning process by the Governor's Mariculture Task Force (MTF).

The MTF, including advisory committees, held public meetings, conducted outreach, and completed an economic analysis as part of the planning process. The economic analysis included case studies of successful mariculture industries, an economic framework for developing the Alaska mariculture industry, and a cost/benefit analysis of the economic impacts of mariculture industry development.

## Vision

Develop a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities.

## Goal

Grow a \$100 million mariculture industry in 20 years.

## Guiding Principles

### **Coordination and Leadership**

Effective implementation of this comprehensive plan requires coordination and commitment of time and resources from local, state, federal and tribal governments, industry, communities, the University, and other interested stakeholders.

### **Sustainability**

Development of mariculture will be compatible with sustainability principles to maintain and improve environmental integrity, as required by the Alaska Constitution and ADF&G management practices.

### **Alaska Native Participation**

Mariculture development will benefit from the involvement of Alaska Natives in every element of the process.

### **Innovation**

Alaska presents many unique challenges, and developers will look globally to applicable research and solutions to apply to Alaska's circumstances and geography.

### **Compatibility**

Implementation of this plan must protect existing marine uses, such as subsistence, commercial fishing, and recreation. It will also utilize Alaska assets and infrastructure.





# MADE IN ALASKA MARICULTURE

## PATHWAY TO A VIABLE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRY

Priority Recommendations Highlighted in Red

### Secure and Promote Investment In Mariculture

- ☞ Increase the Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund principal as utilization increases.
- ☞ Secure private investment.
- ☞ Coordinate federal and state funding sources.
- ☞ Fund business planning, start-ups, and structures.
- ☞ Leverage utilization of existing coastal infrastructure.
- ☞ Develop a web-based mapping tool.
- ☞ Encourage financial support for State agencies to properly manage and timely process farm applications.
- ☞ Develop options for self-assessments, taxation, or other fee mechanisms to support growth.

### Establish an Alaska Mariculture Development Council (AMDC)

- ☞ **Extend the MTF and its advisory committees for three years, with a new directive to begin implementation of the comprehensive plan and creation of the AMDC.**

### Maximize Innovation and Growth Through Research

- ☞ **Establish a Mariculture Research Center to address research priorities and continually update needs.**
- ☞ **Fill the UAF Alaska Sea Grant Mariculture Specialist position.**
- ☞ **Fill the Alaska Region NOAA Aquaculture Coordinator position.**

### Develop New Mariculture Markets and Products

- ☞ Coordinate mariculture marketing through trade associations and consider joining with ASMI through self-assessment.
- ☞ Encourage ASMI to expand marketing to include mariculture products.
- ☞ Engage in product form research and development and market research.
- ☞ Support economic data collection and research.

### Build Public Understanding and Support for Mariculture

- ☞ Inform about maintaining existing uses, preserving the environment, preventing genetic issues, and avoiding market competition with wild-caught seafood.
- ☞ Conduct public outreach to multiple audiences.
- ☞ Identify and communicate with all community stakeholders early in the process.
- ☞ Coordinate information and advocacy through a central body.

### Promote Success Through Alaska Native Participation

- ☞ Conduct outreach to Alaska Native organizations related to mariculture opportunities and relevant technical and financial support.
- ☞ Seek tribal engagement through local outreach during the farm permitting process.
- ☞ Develop collaborative workforce development programs between tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, industry, and other relevant partners.
- ☞ Integrate mariculture topics and studies in relevant educational programs.

### Align Laws, Regulations, and Agency Practices with Stakeholder Needs

- ☞ **Allow restoration, rehabilitation, and enhancement of shellfish stocks.**
- ☞ Create a single point of contact for permitting processes.
- ☞ Modify farm site lease requirements, including bonding requirements, lease fee structures, risk reduction, and best practices.
- ☞ Provide resources necessary to ADEC.
- ☞ Pursue clarification of regulations.

### Secure Seed Supply Through Shellfish and Seaweed Hatcheries

- ☞ **Fund hatchery operating costs until the industry is self-sustaining.**
- ☞ Develop long-term funding options to support hatchery production.
- ☞ **Allow and encourage shellfish and seaweed hatcheries to utilize the Mariculture Revolving Loan Fund.**
- ☞ Provide technical assistance to existing and new hatcheries.

### Grow and Develop the Mariculture Workforce

- ☞ Provide mariculture skill-building resources and professional development opportunities to growers, available both remotely and in-person.
- ☞ Offer an "Introduction to Shellfish/ Seaweed Farming" boot camp.
- ☞ Utilize the University of Alaska's Sea Grant Mariculture Specialist position.
- ☞ Develop a mariculture apprenticeship/ mentorship program.
- ☞ Participate in industry career awareness activities.
- ☞ Evaluate and track participant progress and include mariculture workforce impacts in economic and employment analyses.

'Made in Alaska Mariculture' graphic provided by Alaska Department of Commerce, Division of Economic Development and artist Craig Updegrave.

# \$100 Million Alaska Mariculture Industry in 20 Years

## Long-Range (20-Year) Annual Production Goals

45 million	Pacific oysters (count)
500,000	Geoducks (count)
48 million	Kelp (lbs.—wet)
1.8 million	Blue mussels (lbs.)
565,000	Red king crab (lbs.)
1.9 million	Sea cucumbers (lbs.)

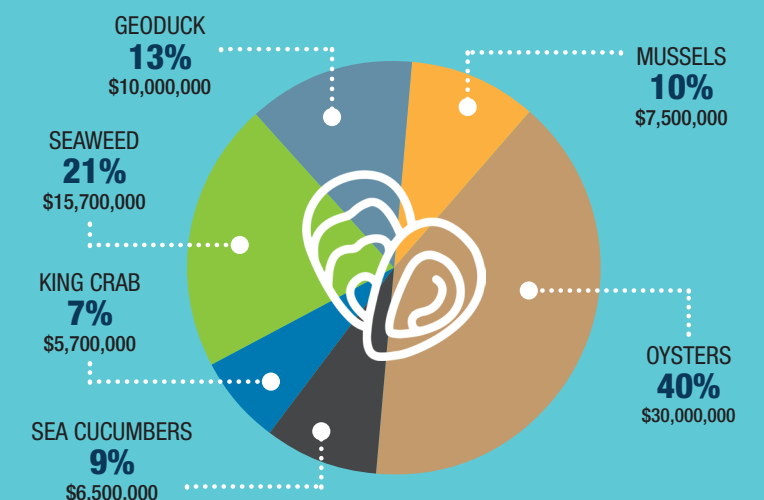
## 20-Year Annual Economic Impact

**\$100 million+**  
Annual output, including all direct, indirect, and induced effects

**\$75 million** in industry sales  
**1,500** total jobs  
**\$38 million** in direct wages  
**\$49 million** in total labor income

Note: 2017 dollars

## 20-Year Annual Revenue Goals







UNIVERSITY  
of ALASKA  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*



*Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association*



OceansAlaska  
MARINE SCIENCE CENTER

# ALASKA MARICULTURE TASK FORCE

Governor Bill Walker established the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (MTF) in 2016 to create a comprehensive plan for development of a viable and sustainable mariculture industry in Alaska. Eleven representatives of communities, tribes, industry, hatcheries, researchers, and state government comprise the MTF.

*Julie Decker, MTF Chair, Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation*

*Paula Cullenberg, Alaska Sea Grant*

*Angel Drobnya, Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association*

*Jeff Hetrick, Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery*

*Heather McCarty, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association and Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology Program*

*Mike Navarre (current Commissioner)/Chris Hladick (former Commissioner), Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development*

*Sam Rabung, Alaska Department of Fish and Game*

*Dr. Michael Stekoll, University of Alaska Southeast and University of Alaska Fairbanks*

*Kate Sullivan, Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association*

*Christopher Whitehead, Sitka Tribe of Alaska and Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research*

*Eric Wyatt, OceansAlaska and Blue Starr Oyster Company*

The full plan may be accessed through the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation [www.afdf.org](http://www.afdf.org) and the Alaska Dept. of Fish and Game [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)



This briefing document was prepared by McDowell Group with funds provided by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, State of Alaska, and industry groups.

Representative Dan Ortiz  
Phone: 907-465-3824  
[Rep.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov)

***RE: Support for HB 41 – shellfish enhancement & ASMI marketing aquatic farm products***

Dear Representative Ortiz,

February 11, 2021

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) would like to express strong support for House Bill 41 which creates a framework to manage and develop shellfish fishery enhancement and benefits the state's economy by providing a method to increase the available harvest of shellfish in an environmentally safe manner. HB 41 will also allow for the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) to market aquatic farm products furthering the development of the new mariculture industry. This bill accomplishes two priority recommendations of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force, as a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

AFDF's membership is comprised of seafood harvesters, seafood processors, and support businesses. Founded in 1978, AFDF's mission is *to identify opportunities common to the Alaska seafood industry and develop efficient, sustainable outcomes that provide benefits to the economy, environment and communities.*

One of AFDF's recent areas of work is spearheading the *Alaska Mariculture Initiative*, which is meant to expedite the development of mariculture in Alaska. As a direct result of this initiative, the ***Alaska Mariculture Task Force*** was established in 2016. The Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in 2018 called the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) with the goal of growing a \$100 million industry in 20 years.

HB 41 has broad stakeholder support and will accomplish two priority recommendations contained within the statewide comprehensive plan. More specifically, HB 41 will accomplish the following:

- 1) allow for shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration; and
- 2) amend the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) statutes to allow (rather than prohibit) marketing of aquatic farm products.

HB 41 creates a regulatory framework with which Alaska Department of Fish & Game's (ADF&G) can manage shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration. This will allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration efforts of species such as King crab, sea cucumber,



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**Buck Laukitis**  
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**Chris Mierzejek**  
*Processor, At-large*  
*Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Assoc.*

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*Pacific Seafood Processors Assoc.*

**Keith Singleton**  
*Harvester, At-large*  
*Alaskan Leader Seafoods*

**John Sund**  
*Service Sector, At-large*  
*Stellar North LLC*



geoduck, abalone, scallops or razor clams. Without this regulatory framework, shellfish enhancement is NOT allowed in Alaska, and development progress is halted.


As the facilitator for sustainability certification programs for the Alaska salmon fishery, AFDF has a unique viewpoint regarding concerns of the potential for negative impacts to wild shellfish from hatchery shellfish. AFDF is the Client for the Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) and the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certifications of Alaska salmon. As a part of these certifications, the ADF&G management of the salmon fishery (including salmon enhancement) is reviewed every year by independent third-party experts to determine whether it meets internationally accepted standards for sustainably managed fisheries. ***Alaska salmon is currently certified as sustainable under for the RFM and MSC programs, because ADF&G's management incorporates a precautionary approach that prioritizes wild fish and minimizes adverse impacts to wild stocks.*** ADF&G has extensive enhancement policies which protect wild stocks (e.g., genetics, release sites, marking, and disease). Given these policies, ADF&G is fulfilling its constitutional mandate to manage the State's fishery resources for sustainability. ADF&G will manage shellfish enhancement with the same constitutional mandate to protect wild stocks.

***Another benefit of developing shellfish fishery enhancement is the important role that shellfish hatcheries can play in adapting to ocean changes and acidification.*** As shellfish hatchery techniques are developed and more is learned through research, we learn more about our abilities to mitigate the effects of ocean acidification (OA) in a hatchery setting. For example, adjusting pH levels at critical juvenile stages in a hatchery can improve survival once crabs are released into the wild. Therefore, shellfish hatcheries may play a critical role in the future by helping protect wild stocks from negative impacts of OA.

***Shellfish enhancement can diversify and expand economic opportunities by increasing harvests for sport, subsistence, or commercial use.*** For example, during the years 2012-2017, salmon enhancement contributed approximately \$720 million in ex-vessel value and \$2.1 billion in first wholesale value to the state's economy. Similarly, shellfish enhancement could infuse the economies of Alaska communities.

***AFDF believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster,*** and passage of HB 41 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope and a path to economic recovery. Mariculture can be part of that economic recovery and HB 41 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment. Thank you for your sponsorship of this mariculture bill.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Executive Director, AFDF

Cc: AFDF Board of Directors

February 15, 2021

Representative Dan Ortiz  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

**Re: Support for HB 41**

Dear Representative Ortiz:

The Steering Committee of the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRAB) program would like to express appreciation and support for House Bill 41. Our group needs this legislation to continue our program and its potential benefits to the crab stocks and to Alaska fisheries and communities.

The AKCRRAB program is a coalition of university, federal and stakeholder groups, formed in 2006 with the goals of adding to the scientific understanding of crab life history and ecology, as well as the eventual rehabilitation of depressed king crab stocks in Alaska. AKCRRAB has developed scientifically sound strategies for hatching, rearing and outplanting king crab in Alaska, in order to help restore populations to self-sustainable levels. This technology can be transferred to other crab species.

In phase one, from 2006 to 2011, AKCRRAB researchers made significant accomplishments in developing and improving methods of hatchery rearing of larval and juvenile king crab from wild-caught broodstock, to the point where large-scale production is feasible. Parallel field and laboratory studies of crab ecology and population genetics were also conducted during this time.

In the second phase, hatchery studies have been complemented by studies essential to understanding optimal release strategies, appropriate habitat, and potential impact on existing ecosystems. This research is providing the science necessary for informing the responsible release of hatchery-reared animals. Increased knowledge will allow scientists and managers to assess the feasibility of ecologically sound rehabilitation of depressed stocks, with potentially substantial benefits to Alaska.



In the third and final phase, AKCRRAB intends to evolve from the current, research-oriented coalition, to a formal entity focused on transitioning hatchery techniques and outplanting technologies to communities and industry as part of statewide efforts to help rehabilitate depleted king crab stocks. As phase three develops, the program will require support and guidance from the State of Alaska, as the transition from feasibility to implementation will need to be guided with a new regulatory structure.

House Bill 41 is a response to the need for new regulations for shellfish culture. Without this legislation and the implementing regulations, no further progress can be made by AKCRRAB and industry. We are literally in a holding pattern until this badly-needed legislation is successful. We have supported similar legislation now for six years, and have seen very little to no opposition.

During that time, several crab stocks have declined further, some crab fisheries have been closed, and the Bristol Bay Red King Crab population is nearing the level that will trigger extensive regulatory responses that have the potential to further restrict not only the crab fishery itself, but also groundfish fisheries. We very much hope that this Legislature will get HB 41 over the finish line.

The AKCRRAB Steering Committee is pleased that the Legislature is addressing this need. We intend to participate fully in further discussions and hearings on this important legislation. The AKCRRAB Steering Committee stands ready to testify and interact with Committee members and staff as needed. Please let us know how we can be of help.

Best regards,

The image shows two handwritten signatures in blue ink. The signature on the left is 'Ginny L. Eckert' and the signature on the right is 'Heather D. McCarty'.

Dr. Ginny L. Eckert, College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences, UAF, Juneau  
Heather McCarty, Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association  
AKCRRAB Steering Committee Co-chairs





***Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery***

***PO Box 369  
Seward, AK  
907 224-5181  
jjh@seward.net***

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capital Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Representative.Can.Ortiz@akleg.gov

Re: HB 41– Shellfish Enhancement

February 5, 2021

Dear Representative Ortiz,

Thank you for co-sponsoring the Shellfish Enhancement legislation to the Alaska State Legislature. As Director of the Alutiiq Pride Shellfish Hatchery I would like to express my support and the importance of this bill.

HB41 would allow us to expand on the work we have been doing for over 20 years on many of the shellfish stocks in Alaska. We have developed hatchery technology techniques for red and blue king crab, littleneck, butter and razor clam, cockles and most recently abalone. We have conducted experimental out stocking experiments with some of these species with great success. We now need the legal mechanism to do large scale projects to determine if we could make a significant difference with increasing populations and harvest opportunities for many fisheries.

Specifically, we would like to begin the application of the techniques we have developed for red king crabs. Although we make no claim that we will be able to resurrect the red king crab populations throughout Alaska we do believe, based on our preliminary work, that we will be able to contribute to localized populations.

This legislation has been through extensive review and should be enacted to move our industry forward.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hetrick  
Director



## **Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association**

302 Gold Street, Suite 202 | Juneau, Alaska 99801 | Phone: (907) 586-0161 | Fax: (907) 586-0165

717 K Street | Anchorage, Alaska 99501 | (907) 929-5273 | Fax: (907) 929-5275 | [www.apicda.com](http://www.apicda.com)

February 15, 2021

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for HB41

Dear Representative Ortiz,

The Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA) greatly appreciates the introduction of HB41 and your continued support for mariculture development in Alaska. This bill provides an important next step for Alaska's growing mariculture industry by allowing a regulatory pathway for enhancement projects that could result in meaningful new common property fishing opportunities, help diversify existing fishing operations and increase local food security. This bill has been a long-standing priority for mariculture advocates and after many years of work from your office and numerous stakeholders, we are very hopeful that it can be enacted this session.

APICDA is a Community Development Quota (CDQ) organization that works with six remote Southwest coastal communities to support long-term economic sustainability through increasing direct participation and local investment in fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. For decades, we have worked in partnership with our communities to invest in shore-side processing plants, vessels, local support infrastructure, workforce development and scholarship programs. Over the past few years there has been a significant increase in interest in mariculture throughout our region and the state, and a growing recognition of the potential for Alaska's existing seafood infrastructure and operations to compliment this emergent industry. You can see this interest reflected in the rising number of mariculture permit applications, extensive information sharing and training efforts and federal funding opportunities to support mariculture development.

HB41 is also necessary to advance the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRB) program, whose research efforts have made significant progress in developing methods for hatching, rearing and out-planting king crab from wild brood stock. The king crab fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands are hugely important to the CDQ program and coastal Alaska communities as both a food and revenue source. Some of these stocks have witnessed concerning declines in recent years and AKCRRB's work could prove instrumental to future rehabilitation efforts or enhancement opportunities. This bill will provide the regulatory framework needed for the program to move past the research stage, under the state's careful oversight and management.

The passage of HB 41 will signal support for the growing investments made by individuals, organizations and businesses throughout the state and greatly aid in exploring the full potential of a mariculture industry in Alaska. We look forward to seeing it successfully forwarded this session.

Sincerely,

Angel Drobnica  
Fisheries and Government Affairs Director



PO Box 1758

Homer, AK 99603 907-401-1372  
info@alaskashellfish.org

www.alaskashellfish.org

February 8, 2021

Representative Daniel Ortiz  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Support for HB 41 – Shellfish Enhancement Projects; Hatcheries; Fees

Dear Representative Ortiz,

The Alaska Shellfish Growers Association (ASGA) would like to express support for HB 41. We recognize that HB 41 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.

While the focus of this bill supports enhancement efforts, we believe that the mariculture industry overall will benefit overall from a healthy base of infrastructure that supports both growers and enhancement efforts. We also believe that allowing ASMA to support our industry could be beneficial.

HB 41 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska, creating a regulatory framework that supports ADF&G in management and enhancement efforts. 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, some of which have been successfully farmed in other areas. This framework (HB 41) is absolutely necessary to continue moving forward with the development of mariculture.

Thank you for sponsoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eric Wyatt".

Eric Wyatt, Vice President  
Alaska Shellfish Growers Association





BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
23929 22<sup>ND</sup> DR SE BOTHELL, WA. 98021  
FORGING COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS IN THE BERING SEA

March 24, 2021

Representative Dan Ortiz  
Alaska State Legislature  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB41 and Stakeholder Support for AKCRRAB Program & Next Steps

Dear Representative Ortiz:

The Bering Sea Fisheries Research Foundation is a non-profit research foundation incorporated in Alaska and formed in 2003 by voluntary participants within the Bering Sea crab industry. BSFRF built strong relationships between crab researchers and industry partners over time to advance the science that directly informs and improves crab management in the Bering Sea. An important part of our mission is to work alongside other efforts in support of improving scientific understanding of crab life history for several Bering Sea crab stocks including king crab. We have directly supported the Alaska King Crab Research, Rehabilitation and Biology (AKCRRAB) program and have closely followed progress over time and its next steps. As a shared stakeholder of important commercial Bering Sea king crab resources, we wanted to take this opportunity to highlight our strong support for continuing AKCRRAB efforts, especially as some of Alaska's iconic king crab stocks persist in a depressed and declining status. Further, we see that support of HB41 for decision makers importantly paves the way for building on the science achieved by the AKCRRAB program.

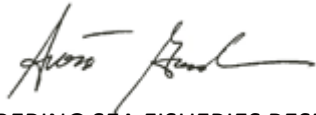
The AKCRRAB program itself has also successfully built stakeholders into collaborative research opportunities. Foundational early life history science has been completed by a number of academic efforts that have added to both the science and to the peer group of those continuing with king crab research and management. Several graduate students within AKCRRAB projects have remained in crab research and advanced into crab management roles in Alaska. More than two dozen peer reviewed publications have covered a variety of topics including larval development, juvenile growth, molting chemistry, habitat preferences, fecundity and reproductive success, and predation. The research to date has been informative for providing the basis and understanding for successful rearing of juvenile crabs for the potential of supplementing natural stocks.

It is unfortunate that we are witnessing significantly depressed stocks for important king crab resources in Alaska. Decades long closures of the Kodiak red king crab fishery has not led to stock recovery. The St. Matthew blue king crab stock is currently listed as overfished as a designation that highlights important emphasis on taking steps toward recovery including federal oversight of a formal stock rebuilding plan. In the central Bering Sea, fisheries for both red and blue king crab remain closed around the Pribilof Islands with little or no apparent signals of recruitment or stock recovery. The iconic Bristol Bay red king crab stock has not been closed since the 2-year period in the mid-1990s, but its status is perilously close to season closure in the upcoming stock assessment cycle. The uncertainty in the status of these stocks and the challenges to sustainably manage them are at hand. The changing environment in the Bering Sea has further added to this uncertainty and is being taken into consideration by crab resource managers.

A unique opportunity to improve elements of the population sustainability appears to be warranted. We see elements of HB41 that provide a means for king crab stock enhancement projects that retain appropriate oversight while scaling, with the means to evaluate progress, are important next steps for building on the successes of AKCRRAB. This opportunity may prove to be critically important for getting to some positive signals of recruitment and stock health for king crab.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our input on these important matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Scott Goodman", with a stylized, flowing script.

BERING SEA FISHERIES RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
Scott Goodman  
Executive Director



## **RESOLUTION of the Board of Directors**

### **Resolution 2021-06: *Support for the passage of Alaska House Bill 41 Shellfish Enhancement Projects, Hatcheries, and Fees***

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Directors of Juneau Economic Development Council (JEDC) has assembled in a meeting this the 3rd day of February 2021;

**WHEREAS**, the mariculture industry in Alaska is currently an approximately \$1.4 million annual industry and mariculture has the potential to provide more year-round jobs in coastal communities, leading to more diversified and resilient local economies.

**WHEREAS**, in 2018 the Governor established a Mariculture Task Force and Mariculture Development Plan, with the overarching goal to establish a \$100 million mariculture industry in Alaska in 20 years.

**WHEREAS**, under current regulations, shellfish enhancement permits are not authorized in Alaska, which limits sector growth.

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 41 creates a regulatory framework with which the Department of Fish & Game can manage shellfish enhancement projects and issue permits, allowing for the development of responsible shellfish enhancement and restoration projects.

**WHEREAS**, House Bill 41 amends the statutes governing the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) to enable them to market aquatic farm products, such as oysters and kelp.

**WHEREAS**, the changes proposed in HB 41 were priority recommendations of the Mariculture Development Plan, as outlined by the Governor's Mariculture Task Force.

**WHEREAS**, the passage of House Bill 41 is crucial to the expansion of mariculture in Alaska and supported by those in the industry.

**WHEREAS**, JEDC has long supported the emerging mariculture industry in Alaska through various avenues, including the Southeast Alaska Cluster Initiative.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:** The Board of Directors of the Juneau Economic Development Council expresses support for the passage of Alaska House Bill 41.

**The undersigned hereby certify that the Board of Directors of the Juneau Economic Development Council duly adopted this Resolution on February 3, 2021.**

**Garrett Schoenberger, JEDC Chairperson**

**Melissa Kookesh, JEDC Secretary**





February 16, 2021

OceansAlaska  
2417 Tongass Ave Suite 111-277  
Ketchikan, AK 99901

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol, Room 513  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Ortiz,

I hope you are doing well. As the President of the Board of Directors for OceansAlaska, a non-profit shellfish hatchery located in Ketchikan, our board supports HB 41. HB 41 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and shellfish hatcheries, and allows the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute to help market mariculture products. This will allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of certain species. OceansAlaska supports HB 41 as it will diversify economic development, sustain cultural legacy, increase environmental stewardship, and create additional seafood markets that can help bring revenue to our coastal communities through:

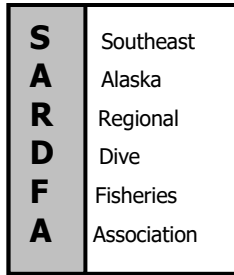
1. Enhancement of traditional and economically important shellfish species.
2. Enhancement of shellfish species integral to marine ecosystems and habitat restoration.
3. Enhancement of shellfish species that are vital to climate change and pollution mitigation.
4. Enhancement of existing and new seafood markets.

Thank you for your support of HB 41 and the mariculture industry.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tomi Marsh".

Tomi Marsh  
[tmarsh@oceansalaska.org](mailto:tmarsh@oceansalaska.org)  
206-972-8217



*Mission Statement: To develop, expand, and enhance new and existing dive fisheries in Southeast Alaska.*

Phil Doherty – Co-Executive Director  
Kate Sullivan Co-Executive Director  
PO Box 5417  
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901  
1-907-225-2853  
[sardfa@kpunet.net](mailto:sardfa@kpunet.net)  
[info@sardfa.org](mailto:info@sardfa.org)  
[www.sardfa.org](http://www.sardfa.org)

March 01, 2021

**Support for HB 41: "An Act relating to management of enhanced stocks of shellfish; authorizing certain nonprofit organizations to engage in shellfish enhancement projects; relating to application fees for salmon hatchery permits; and providing for an effective date."**

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol Room 513  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Dan Ortiz,

The Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association (SARDFA) appreciates your efforts to assist the emerging mariculture industry in Alaska. SARDFA has been involved in sea cucumber enhancement work for several years. HB 41 is an important element to have in place so that SARDFA may someday be able to enhance wild stocks. Without HB 41, the State of Alaska lacks the statutory authority to manage invertebrate enhancement.

While SARDFA supports HB 41 we are aware of the increased costs the potential increase in the mariculture of bi-valve shellfish will have on the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Environment Conservation. We are particularly aware of the increased cost to the Department of Environmental Conservation for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning and water quality testing. Without increases in DEC's budget they may not be able to continue testing to existing user groups. We encourage you to continue support for these agencies, not only in this Legislative session, but in future years.

Again, thank you for your efforts to support mariculture development in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Phil Doherty  
Kate Sullivan

Member of:  
Southeast Conference  
United Fishermen of Alaska  
PACRIM Shellfish Sanitation Association  
Interstate Shellfish Sanitation  
Conference



612 W. Willoughby Ave., Suite B  
P.O. Box 21989, Juneau, AK 99802  
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SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

February 22, 2021

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
[Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov)

**Re: Support for HB 41 – Shellfish Enhancement**

Dear Representative Ortiz,

On behalf of the Southeast Conference, I would like to express support for HB 41 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.

Southeast Conference is a state and federally designated regional economic development organization for Southeast Alaska. For nearly 60 years, Southeast Conference has served as the collective voice for advancing the region's economy. Southeast Conference has over 200 members from organizations representing business and governments from 32 regional communities. The mission of Southeast Conference is to undertake and support activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities and a quality environment in Southeast Alaska.

HB 41 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska. It creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement and restoration. This will allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, or razor clams.

Another benefit of developing shellfish fishery enhancement is the important role that shellfish hatcheries can play in adapting to ocean changes and acidification, and the ecosystem services that shellfish provide to the marine environment.

Shellfish enhancement can diversify and expand opportunities in coastal communities and increase the resiliency of Alaska's wild shellfish. The Southeast Conference supports HB 41 and appreciates your work to provide additional economic opportunities in Alaska.

Sincerely,

Robert Venables  
Executive Director  
Southeast Conference



# UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 20229, Juneau AK 99802-0229

**Phone:** (907) 586-2820

**E-mail:** [ufa@ufa-fish.org](mailto:ufa@ufa-fish.org) **Website:** [www.ufa-fish.org](http://www.ufa-fish.org)

February 23, 2021

Senator Gary Stevens  
State Capitol Room 103  
Juneau AK, 99801

Representative Dan Ortiz  
State Capitol Room 513  
Juneau AK, 99801

**RE: Support SB 64 and HB 41- Shellfish Projects; Hatcheries; Fees**

Dear Senator Stevens and Representative Ortiz,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association, representing 36 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state, and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast.

In our 2014 resolution (attached), UFA supported the Alaska Mariculture Initiative as a method to facilitate expansion of the mariculture industry for marine plants and shellfish farming, enhancement and restoration, to increase jobs and economic opportunity for fishermen, farmers and support businesses. We support SB 64 & HB 41 to help implement the goals of the state's Mariculture Task Force as a step towards providing new economic opportunity in Alaska's coastal communities.

SB 64 & HB 41 create a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can allow for and manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and hatcheries. This would allow interested stakeholders to continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, razor clams, or others. This framework is essential to allow the development of mariculture related to wild shellfish enhancement.

It should be noted UFA membership includes eight salmon aquaculture associations that will each be subject to the increase of their fee on new hatchery facilities to \$1000, yet we support SB 64 & HB 41 because of the broader need to help develop shellfish aquaculture beyond only producing broodstock.

UFA strongly supports Alaska's salmon enhancement programs that are carefully regulated to provide salmon for common property harvest by subsistence, sport and commercial fisheries without detriment to wild stocks. We believe the state can carefully develop opportunities for additional enhancement of shellfish, and passage of SB 64 & HB 41 will help in this effort.

Respectfully,

Matt Alward  
President

Frances H. Leach  
Executive Director