

Kodiak Livestock Co-Op
P.O. Box 273
Kodiak, Alaska
99615

VIA E-MAIL AND USPS

Senator Gary Stevens
Representative Louise Stutes
State Capital
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: New Department of Agriculture (EO-136)

Dear Gary and Louise,

The Kodiak Livestock Co-op has served the agricultural needs of Kodiak's livestock industry for more than 50 years. As you are aware, we maintain and operate a slaughter facility in Bells Flats. In addition, we work co-operatively with the Kodiak Soil and Water Conservation District, 4-H and Kodiak growers. We often sponsor livestock events and provide scholarships to individuals that may want to compete off island. Recently, we've offered our facility for use by a coalition of kelp farmers.

As you can imagine, the Kodiak livestock Co-Op as well as our members have had extensive, multi-generational, dealings with the State Division of Agriculture under the Department of Natural Resources. Most of our interactions have been positive but it's been obvious, from the very beginning, that oil and Gas and mining were the priorities in the Department of Natural Resources and that Agriculture was a less important Departmental concern. The image of the "poor stepchild" comes to mind. Consequently, we've seen limited progress and many setbacks for Alaska's agriculture sector.

When Governor Dunleavy, through Executive Order 136 proposed to develop a new Department of Agriculture, the members of the Kodiak Livestock Co-Op carefully discussed the positives and negatives that may occur. First, we were concerned that a new Department, outside of Natural Resources, may receive less funding. Second, we were concerned that a new governor, with different priorities, would not support an Agriculture Department. On the other hand, our Co-Op could see that a new Department of Agriculture, focused specifically on agriculture and food security with folks knowledgeable about Alaska's challenges and limitations may indeed further Alaska's agricultural interests. On balance, we strongly favor the Governor's creation of an Alaska Department of Agriculture.

If you have any additional questions regarding our support of EO 136, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Very truly yours,
Duncan Fields

Duncan Fields, Co-Op President