

April 16, 2024



The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Donald Olson, and Bert Stedman  
Co-Chairs of the Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Co-Chairs Hoffman, Olson, and Stedman, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

**The Nature Conservancy in Alaska (TNC-AK) supports S.C.R. 10, a resolution intended to establish the Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force.** Establishing this task force would create a body focused on consideration of policy opportunities for the future of the seafood industry in Alaska. As Alaskans face a series of challenges resulting in loss of markets, decreased fishing opportunities, and the subsequent loss of associated income, this focus on possible policy solutions is timely and necessary.

The seafood industry is a cornerstone of Alaska's economy. In 2019, the industry contributed \$5.7 billion in economic output to Alaska's economy, supported an estimated 37,400 jobs in Alaska, and was the largest private sector employer by industry.<sup>1</sup> Built into those numbers is also the reality of the seafood industry in rural, coastal Alaska: an economic engine that provides opportunities and benefits where other industries may not reach. **As Alaska's economy, local communities, and fishermen face fiscal pressure due to compounding forces on the seafood industry, a well-balanced Joint Legislative Seafood Industry Task Force could provide guidance for addressing these pressures through policy.**

TNC-AK knows that Alaska's varied fisheries support livelihoods, local economies, and valuable traditions. We also know that local participation in the seafood industry, particularly in rural communities, provides substantial indirect and cumulative economic benefits to families, broader communities, and Alaska writ large.<sup>2</sup> We extend our support for S.C.R 10 with these interests – as well as our broader organizational emphasis on science-based decision making – in mind.

Thank you for your interest in engaging with this issue head-on, as required by the urgency and complexity of this moment. **As an organization with more than two decades of experience operating in Alaska, we look forward to being a resource for this task force.** As well, we stand ready to contribute our nonpartisan approach to support any appointed members in developing science-based and community-driven policy options, if S.C.R 10 is passed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivy Spohnholz".

Ivy Spohnholz  
Alaska State Director  
The Nature Conservancy

<sup>1</sup> [The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry](#). Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, January 2022.

<sup>2</sup> [Righting the Ship: Restoring Local Fishing Access and Opportunity in Bristol Bay Salmon Fisheries](#). Report prepared by Dr. Rachel Donkersloot (dba Coastal Cultures Research) for The Nature Conservancy in Alaska, July 2021 (pg. 18-19).