

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 31, 2011

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Governor
State of Alaska
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell:

We recently heard presentations by the Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) and the City of Seward regarding a proposal before the State of Alaska and the Alaska State Legislature to construct homeport facilities for the Community Development Quota (CDQ) fishing fleet.

As you are aware, Alaska has been working since Statehood to fully develop its coastal marine resources. In 1976 the Congress expanded sovereign jurisdiction over the conservation and management of fish stocks to 200 miles. The State of Alaska worked tirelessly within the framework of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to transition from a federal fishery dominated by foreign fishing vessels to a fishery fully utilized by Americans. Over the last fifteen years we have seen substantial investments into the Alaskan fishery, and it is now a much more substantial part of the state's economy.

The next logical step, in our opinion, is to promote policies and initiatives that will maximize the value of the federal fisheries to Alaskan communities and businesses. The State of Alaska worked in partnership with the Alaska Congressional Delegation in the 1990s to develop the CDQ program in the Bering Sea. For the first time, residents of Bering Sea villages were provided a direct stake in the fishing industry. The CDQ community participation has taken firm root to include increasing ownership of the fishing and processing fleets. The next phase is bringing more economic value from this participation to Alaska.

The President and Board of Directors of the Coastal Villages Region Fund have proposed Seward become the homeport for its growing fishing and processing fleet. The City of Seward meets all CVRF requirements that include a (1) year-round ice-free deep water port; (2) road, rail, and air access; (3) available space on the water and upland for development; (4) major ship repair capabilities; and (5) maritime training and licensing through AVTEC. These are the assets that will allow successful and profitable re-location of the CVRF fleet from Seattle to Seward.

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The relocation of the largest CDQ group to Alaska will begin the transition of hiring Alaskan vendors to repair propellers and vessels, weld and paint, service electronics, mend fishing gear, repair diesel engines, supply packaging, provide fuel and groceries, and provide marine safety training. The dollars earned by Coastal Villages in the Bering Sea fisheries will ripple through the greater Alaska economy. The hurdles to this initiative are the lack of adequate dock space and uplands in an Alaskan port community, on the road system, to handle the substantial needs of this growing enterprise.

In a preliminary study, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has already found the project is economic. We are aware that an economic analysis, engineering design, geotechnical report and preparation of permit documents all need to be submitted to move this project forward. Construction of the project and movement of the home port of CVRF to Seward could be completed by December 15, 2014, if the previously mentioned steps are funded and expeditiously enacted.

We hope that this project may act as the catalyst for the consideration by other CDQ groups to homeport in Alaska. Such a move would result in tens of millions of dollars in new annual income for Alaskan vendors, more revenues for the State of Alaska, and local job creation. We look forward to working with you in the future to help Alaska maximize the value of the federal fisheries for its residents.

Respectfully,



The image shows three handwritten signatures in blue ink. From left to right: 1) Lisa Murkowski, United States Senator, with her signature in a cursive script. 2) Mark Begich, United States Senator, with his signature in a cursive script. 3) Don Young, Congressman for Alaska, with his signature in a cursive script. Below each signature is the name of the individual and their title in a smaller, printed font.

Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Mark Begich
United States Senator

Don Young
Congressman for Alaska