



*With Spirit and Strength*

March 1, 2022

Dear Members of the Legislature:

On behalf of the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc. (APIA), I would like to express support for HB 298, a bill supporting the creation of a food security task force to develop a comprehensive statewide strategy to strengthen Alaska's food systems, improve food security for all Alaskans, and encourage more food to be locally grown.

APIA is the federally recognized tribal organization of the Aleut people in Alaska. Our organizational mission, to provide self-sufficiency and independence of the Unangan/Unangas by advocacy, training, technical assistance and economic enhancement; To assist in meeting the health, safety and well-being needs of each Unangan/Unangas community; To promote, strengthen and ensure the unity of the Unangan; and To strengthen and preserve Unangax cultural heritage is directly aligned with HB 298's intent. HB 298 will reinforce our efforts to ensure all community members in our region have enough nutritious food for a healthy life, allowing our communities to thrive.

Community members living in the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region face unique challenges to food production and maintaining access to nutritious foods due to our geographic isolation. Finding solutions to overcome these barriers will require research and collaboration among the different food sectors across the state. The task force created by HB 298 will allow for broad representation among stakeholders of the Alaska food system while also giving communities throughout our region a voice at the table.

The formation of a robust food security task force stands to greatly enhance Alaska's food system, thereby enhancing the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Region's food system, and we are enthusiastic about the research and projects that HB 298 will provide for our region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dimitri Philemonof".

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