

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov



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Re: Support for SB 172

March 4, 2016

Dear Senator Giessel and Senate Resources Committee:

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) would like to express support for Senate Bill 172; AFDF also recognizes that SB 172 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.

Since 1978, AFDF's mission has been to identify problems and opportunities that are common across Alaska's seafood industry and help develop solutions utilizing applied research and development which balancing economic benefits with sustainability principles. AFDF's membership is comprised of seafood harvesters, seafood processors, and support sector businesses.

One of AFDF's recent projects is to spearhead the Alaska Mariculture Initiative, which is meant to expedite the development of mariculture in Alaska with the vision to grow a \$1 billion industry in 30 years. Governor Walker's recent [Administrative Order #280](#) establishes the Alaska Mariculture Task Force and is also part of this larger effort to develop mariculture. The purpose of the Task Force is to provide recommendations to develop a viable and sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska's economy, environment, and communities.

SB 172 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska. SB 172 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement and shellfish hatcheries, in a similar fashion as the current management of salmon fishery enhancement and salmon hatcheries. This would allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement work on species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, or razor clams.

Some individual stakeholders groups may seek minor amendments to the bill, and AFDF would be happy to play a role in communicating between stakeholders and the Committee. The most common concern voiced so far is the inclusion of salmon hatcheries in SB 172, which can be confusing to the public and potentially ineffective for bill passage.

Overall, however, AFDF supports the intent of SB 172 and appreciates the Administration's proactive role in introducing the legislation.

Please let me know how I can be of help.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Executive Director