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**RE: Support for ARDOR reauthorization**

Dear Alaska Legislators,

January 19, 2016

I am writing this letter in support of the reauthorization of the Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR) program. I believe the work and support the ARDORs are able to provide through this program offer great benefit to the state, and will be a crucial component in Alaska's future efforts to diversify and grow the economy.

The ARDOR program was created in 1988, with the goal of supporting regional economic development organizations' efforts to grow and strengthen their local economies. The 11 organizations that currently hold ARDOR status work diligently to uphold that mission. Leveraging a relatively modest investment by the state (roughly \$70,000 per ARDOR), these organizations have been able to match the state funds they receive by almost three to one. They have then utilized this funding to do a range of important projects across the state which have improved the local economies and driven economic development efforts statewide.

I am writing on behalf of my experiences with ARDORS as the executive director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF), although I have also worked with ARDORS in many other capacities, including as a municipal Assembly member. AFDF supports the ARDORS' efforts to make Alaska a better place to live and do business. We believe that this type of regional and statewide collaborative economic development is exactly what Alaska needs.

I respectfully urge you to support the ARDOR reauthorization at its current funding level. The current fiscal situation emphasizes the importance to work toward economic diversification in Alaska.

Thank you for your time and service to Alaska.

Sincerely,

Julie Decker, Executive Director

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