

Chair Stutes & House Fisheries Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801  
[Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov](mailto:Rep.Louise.Stutes@akleg.gov)



**Re: Support for HB 300**

March 23, 2016

Dear Chair Stutes and House Fisheries Committee:

The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) would like to express support for HB 300. ***AFDF recognizes that HB 300 is part of a larger effort to develop mariculture in Alaska.***

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

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 for a comprehensive plan 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.

***HB 300 plays an important role in the development of mariculture in Alaska.*** HB 300 creates a regulatory framework with which ADF&G can manage shellfish fishery enhancement, restoration and hatcheries, in a similar fashion as the current management of salmon fishery enhancement and hatcheries. This would allow interested stakeholders to either continue or begin enhancement and/or restoration of species such as King crab, sea cucumber, geoduck, abalone, or razor clams.

I would like to briefly address concerns of negative impacts to wild shellfish from hatchery shellfish. As a Client for the Alaska Responsible Fisheries Management (RFM) sustainability certification program, AFDF has a unique position and

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viewpoint on this issue. On one hand, AFDF hears concerns from industry that ADF&G's fishery enhancement policies are too restrictive, increase cost, and slow progress. On the other hand, AFDF is also in the position of facilitating a review of ADF&G's fishery enhancement policies by independent third-party experts to determine whether they follow internationally accepted standards for sustainably managed fisheries. ***Alaska salmon maintains RFM certification, because of ADF&G's policies which are designed around a precautionary approach that prioritizes wild fish and minimizes adverse impacts to wild stocks.*** Following is a list of some of ADF&G's enhancement policies: genetics, disease, pathology, siting of hatcheries, fish culturing techniques, release strategies, harvest, habitat, marking, transportation, planning and reporting. ***Given these extensive policies, AFDF and independent third-parties have confidence that ADF&G is fulfilling its constitutional mandate to manage our fishery resources for sustainability.***

Finally, I understand that a committee substitute (CS) will be introduced at Thursday's meeting that mirrors the latest version of the companion bill (SB 172) which was passed out of Senate Resources Committee. This is our preferred version with changes that improve the clarity and intent of the bill. ***AFDF supports this CS of HB 300 and appreciates the Administration's proactive role in introducing the legislation.***

If there are any questions, I am happy to answer them. Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Sincerely,



Julie Decker, Executive Director