

NELSON FARMS LLC

Delta Junction, Alaska

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POTATOES
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March 30, 2015

Funding recommendation ...DNR Budget

To:

Senate Finance Committee
finance.committee@akleg.gov

Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Mike Dunleavy
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Donald Olson

Please find below a copy of "my response to Senator Click Bishop's District C Survey Request (2-25-15)" requesting areas to consider for funding cuts.

Div of Agriculture is heavily "over employee'd" in the Mat Valley vs the Interior...check the #'s of Div of Agriculture employees in each region...the North does not need more; Palmer needs less. The PMC is duplicating what is or should be performed by UAF. DNR largely ignored the re-appropriation language for use of \$ that the legislature moved to DNR/Div of Ag to be used for "... the purposes of potato export..." I will forward copy of an Info Request I made recently to DNR that asked for a bit more sunlight. Was not a big fan of export of seed potatoes to China but did try to help Richard Larsen (Idaho) when he engaged with China to export seed potatoes. DNR seems intent on focusing only on local production. I own 3500 acres ag rights and fee simple ground in the interior, grow

potatoes under center pivot irrigation, have storage for 3000 plus tons...we have the capability to produce a lot of seed... Export of seed from Alaska to the Pacific North West seems where Alaska should focus 1st. I do not need State financing for expansion, capital or operating. It would be good if DNR would utilize it's \$ for the purposes the Legislature intended. Appreciate your efforts.



Ronald G. Nelson
Nelson Farms LLC
Delta Junction

Attachment: DNR Information Request

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January 20, 2015

Information request

Franci Havemeister, Director
Division of Agriculture
1800 Glenn Highway, Suite 12
Palmer, Alaska 99645

Dear Ms. Havemeister:

Pursuant to the State of Alaska's Public Records Act, I request the following information:

Copies of all files, emails, letters, memos, laboratory plate readings and/or other records that are related to, or that may be indicative of any disease in any potato seed or potato plants tested by the Division of Agriculture or tested by others for the Division of Agriculture during 2014. (Do not include information you provided earlier, for part of 2014, which you furnished pursuant to the request I made August 5, 2014).

Additionally please provide an accounting of all expenditures to date and those budgeted for the remainder of the FY15 budget cycle which have been paid or will be paid from the re-appropriated funding from DCCED/AMEP to DNR which was/is to be used in accordance with the following:

"Sec 30. DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES. The unexpended and unobligated balance, estimated to be \$300,000 of the appropriation made in Sec. 24(b), ch. 5, FSSLA 2011 (Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, Economic development, phytosanitary testing of seed potatoes through the University of Alaska Fairbank's Plant materials laboratory as required by the negotiated trade protocol with China - \$600,000) is re-appropriated to the Department of Natural Resources, division of agriculture, plant materials center, for seed potato testing, promotion, and education


for the purposes of potato export for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2014 and June 30, 2015. (Chapter 16 SLA 13)".

Please provide DNR's justification, for each of the expenditures or budgeted items, considering the wording, in the above appropriation language, which states in part:

"... for the purposes of potato export..."

I understand there has not been any potato export activity recently and I am concerned that these monies are being used for items that should have been accomplished by DNR prior, as part of its normal responsibilities under AS 03.05.010 and certainly prior to Alaska losing 5.5 million dollars as documented by the Legislative Audit in 2012.

Sincerely,


Ronald G. Nelson
Nelson Farms LLC
Delta Junction

CC:
Ed Fogles, Deputy Commissioner, DNR
Senator John Coghill