



March 31, 2017

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801
Senator.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

RE: Support for SB 89 – Shellfish Enhancement

Dear Senator Stevens:

On behalf of the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference, I would like to express support for SB 89, which creates the necessary framework to manage and develop shellfish fishery enhancement. This initiative will benefit the State's economy by providing a method to increase the available harvest of shellfish for public use in an environmentally safe manner.

As an advocate for over 40 marine based economies of Southwest Alaska, SWAMC views this proposal as an opportunity to develop available resources to support a sustainable economy in rural Alaska. While some of the richest fishery, marine, and shellfish resources in the world lie on our doorstep, the necessary management measures meant to protect the long-term viability of the of the resource has led to reduced opportunity for harvest, particularly for the crab industry. This legislation will provide a regulatory framework to manage crab fishery enhancement, or other species of shellfish, if pursued by interested stakeholders. This could allow for additional fishing opportunity and crab processing while maintaining stocks at healthy levels. We see Mariculture as a healthy, viable economic model for the coastal communities that will allow individuals to once again access a new and growing economic opportunity with limited upfront restrictions.

SWAMC's vision to promote vibrant and livable communities in Southwest Alaska is tied to initiatives to fully develop the Mariculture industry which will create jobs, maintain or improve the environment, and improve access to valuable resources. I look forward to collaborating with you on your efforts to support this initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug B. Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Doug Griffin
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair, Senate Resources Committee