

THE VOICE OF ALASKA BUSINESS



POLICY BRIEFING BOOKLET

Photo Credit: Madison Kosmo

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(S) State – (F) Federal – (B) Both

2018 SUBMITTED POSITIONS

1. (S) Support a sustainable funding model for Alaska Tourism Marketing: An Alaska Tourism Improvement District (TID)
- Submitted by Sarah Leonard 18-19
2. (S) Support the Iditarod Trail Committee in its efforts to preserve the rich tradition and future of the Alaska sled dog, mushing, and the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race
- Submitted by Chas St. George 20-21
3. (S) Support policies that encourage and protect Food Freedom in Alaska
- Submitted by Marisa Sharrah 22-23

2017 PRIORITIES

State Priorities: 24

- Support reduction of spending to sustainable levels
- Support comprehensive workers' compensation reform

Federal Priorities: 24

- Support repeal or reform of the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act
- Support oil and gas exploration and development in Alaska's federal areas including; the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska (NPRA), Cook Inlet, and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR)

2018 Submitted Positions

3. Support policies that encourage and protect Food Freedom in Alaska - *NEW*

Date Submitted: 8-16-17

LAC Recommendation:

The LAC recommends adoption of this position to encourage small scale agriculture in Alaska.

Sponsor:

Marisa Sharrah
President/CEO
Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce
100 Cushman St. Suite 102
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907-452-1105
marisa@fairbankschamber.org

Advocate:

Joni Scharfenberg
District Coordinator/Committee Member
Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation
District
907-978-1727
jonisc@gmail.com

Positions Statement:

The Alaska Chamber supports "Food Freedom" in Alaska, which allows for the sale and consumption of homemade foods and to encourage the expansion of agricultural sales by farmers markets, ranches, farms and home-based producers and accessibility of the same to informed end consumers.

Support for the Position:

The growing agricultural businesses in Alaska will be impeded by the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA), which are not applicable regulations to locally grown products because these locally produced products are not shipped interstate. The cost of regulation is prohibitive to Alaska's small farmers and food entrepreneurs and threaten their existence as well as the state's food security. While Alaska's agricultural businesses are aware of food safety issues and wish to produce safe food, prohibitive regulations will discourage the growth of the industry. "Food Freedom" in Alaska focuses on intrastate produce involving educated and informed consumers.

Supporters:

Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District, Alaska Association of Farmers Markets, and the Alaska Farm Bureau.

Opposition:

Unknown at this time.

Action Required:

1) Alaska Farmers Market Association to finalize the language for the Alaska Food Freedom Act; and 2) for Alaska State Legislature to pass this legislation.

Fiscal Impact:

If the Alaska State Government begins to enforce the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulations on local food producers, there will be an increased cost to support the inspection and permitting of such producers. There is a positive fiscal and budget impact in the form of savings to the state's operating budget if policies are passed in support of "Food Freedom" in Alaska. The Tanana Valley Farmers Market brought \$1.4 million in income to the local community between May and September 2016. Statewide Farmers Markets also contributed thousands of dollars to their local and state economies and provided jobs to residents. With increased regulations, thousands of dollars will be lost to Alaska when small businesses are unable to comply with current regulations.

Supporting Documents:

1. Wyoming Food Freedom Act Legislation 2015; HB 0056
2. Civil Eats Article: 'Food Freedom' Advocates Claim Victory in Maine: The state is the latest to pass a food sovereignty law that allows consumers to buy food directly from farmers.
3. Food Safety News Article: Two-year old Wyoming Food Freedom Act gets expanded
4. Reason.com Article: Food Freedom Movement Spreads to North Dakota: The right to sell what you make without overwhelming government regulation affirmed