



ALASKA FARM BUREAU, INC.

Bryce Wrigley, President
bjwrigley@gmail.com

Amy Seitz, Executive Director
amy.seitz@gmail.com

February 6, 2018

Alaska State Legislators
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Legislators:

The Alaska Farm Bureau would like to express our support for efforts to expand and improve opportunities for agriculture in Alaska through CSHB 217 which combined HB 217 and HB 46.

We spend \$2.5 billion on food annually, and approximately 95% of that is shipped in. Improving opportunities for the agriculture industry through better agriculture policy will assist in building this industry.

Alaska is still a young state, and the agriculture industry needs to be given the chance to grow. We do not have the infrastructure that other states have, which can be a challenge for our farmers in expanding their businesses. In working with our farmers to improve access to markets we can build food security and improve Alaska's economy.

- Improving access and options for consumers and farmers with "cottage food exemptions" will help support building our small farming businesses.
- Adding more flexibility for the product preference program for Alaska Grown products could increase the numbers of farms that can qualify for this program.
- Allowing the Division of Agriculture receipt authority on purchases of Alaska Grown merchandise will give the division the ability to continue building their marketing program and provide marketing materials to producers.

All of these aspects can increase access to markets, making it easier for farms to expand and for new and beginning farmers to be successful. With the median age of farmers around 57, attracting younger farmers is necessary to keep the agriculture industry growing.

We ask for your support of this bill and help improve the agriculture industry in Alaska.

Respectfully,


Bryce Wrigley, President
Alaska Farm Bureau, Inc.

37075 Nicholas View Lane

Soldotna, Alaska 99669

907-252-5064