



Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association

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Jan. 29, 2019

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol, Room 423
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for SB 22-Shellfish Enhancement Projects; Hatcheries

Dear Senator Stevens,

The Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association (APICDA) appreciates the introduction of SB 22. This bill will provide a vehicle for continuing discussion on the development and support of a viable and sustainable mariculture industry in Alaska.

APICDA is a Community Development Quota (CDQ) organization that works with six remote coastal communities to support long-term economic sustainability in the Aleutian-Pribilof region through increasing direct participation and local investment in fisheries in the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands. For 27 years, we have worked in partnership with our communities to invest in shore-side processing plants, vessels, quota purchases, local support infrastructure, workforce development and scholarship programs. These investments have resulted in meaningful employment and social programs in areas where very limited economic opportunities exist.

Our CDQ residents, and many other stakeholders, both new to and those already heavily involved in the seafood industry, have expressed interest in investing in or diversifying their existing operations to include mariculture projects.

SB 22 will provide an important framework for agencies to permit and manage shellfish enhancement projects. Any future enhancement programs will be consistent with Alaska's sustainably managed fisheries and will have to comply with the same stringent regulatory and environmental requirements as the state's healthy and well-established salmon enhancement programs. These programs have significant oversight to protect wild salmon runs and have provided hugely successful economic benefits to Alaska's commercial salmon fleets and important revenue streams back to communities. We believe the passage of SB 22 is essential in order for Alaska to meaningfully explore the full potential of a mariculture industry to provide new economic growth during a critically important time for the state.

Advancing environmentally sound mariculture projects will provide a new economic branch to Alaska's robust commercial fisheries and could provide important future monitoring tools and adaptive measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change. We believe that the passage of this bill will result in substantial benefits to coastal fisheries-dependent communities and we fully support moving both forward.

Sincerely,

Angel Drobnica
Fisheries and Government Affairs Director