

MADE IN ALASKA MARICULTURE

To: Representative Andi Story
State Capitol Room 403, Juneau, AK 99801
Phone: 907-465-3744
Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov

RE: Support for HB 115 – Aquatic Farming & Hatchery Site Leases

Dear Representative Story,

March 1, 2021

On behalf of the Alaska Mariculture Task Force (Task Force), I would like to express strong support for House Bill 115 – Aquatic Farming & Hatchery Site Leases, which will be a part of a larger plan to fully develop the mariculture industry in Alaska, with a goal to grow a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

The Task Force believes that growth of the mariculture industry can play an important role in Alaska's economic recovery from the COVID-19 disaster, and passage of HB 115 is central to fully enabling that economic potential. The Task Force members recognize the difficult circumstances that cut short the 2020 legislative session in which a committee substitute version of this bill was in its final committee of referral and poised for passage. We thank you for introducing this bill again.

In 2016, Governor Walker established and appointed members to the Task Force by [Administrative Order No.280](#), and in 2018, the Task Force completed a statewide comprehensive plan in order to accelerate the development of mariculture - the [Alaska Mariculture Development Plan](#) (attached is a [brief summary](#)). The Task Force was re-authorized in 2018 to work towards implementation of the Plan. Upon his election, Governor Dunleavy kept the Task Force in place, as he shares the vision of what mariculture could mean to the state: jobs and opportunities.

HB 115 has broad stakeholder support and is an important step toward efficiently developing a mariculture industry in Alaska. The main focus of the bill is to align the lease renewal process for aquatic farms and hatcheries with the lease renewal process for most other types of state leases. This change would simplify and shorten the process, reduce workload on DNR staff by allowing them to more quickly address other aquatic farm lease applications, and provide businesses with more certainty.

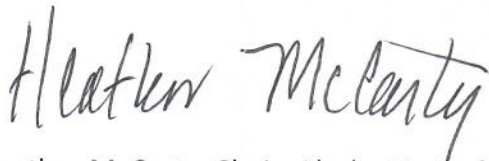
HB 115 also includes a simple reporting requirement for DNR that would allow the Alaska Legislature to better understand the growth of the industry in the future. And, HB 115 explicitly puts into statute that ecotourism and educational purposes are allowed uses on aquatic farm

and hatchery sites, and prohibits charging additional fees for lands leased as aquatic farms and hatcheries.

After the disaster of COVID-19, Alaskans need hope, and a path to economic recovery. The Task Force strongly believes that mariculture can be part of the economic recovery. HB 115 will help enable this potential for private investment, without requirements for state financial investment – a bright spot on the horizon.

Thank you for your consideration of this mariculture bill as part of a package of legislation that creates and supports economic activity for Alaskans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather McCarty". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather McCarty, Chair, Alaska Mariculture Task Force

Cc: Alaska Mariculture Task Force