



March 2, 2021

House Fisheries
The Alaska State Legislature

Re: Aquatic Farm Lease Act HB115

To whom it may concern,

As a maritime company operating off the coast of Alaska, Global Seas supports the Aquatic Farm Lease Bill (HB115) introduced by Rep. Story as it allows valuable Alaskan mariculture industries to operate on the same playing field as other similar but land-based operations.

We believe that mariculture is an industry that is and should be important to the State of Alaska and all Alaskans. However, unlike other types of land-based operations, mariculture companies must renew offshore leases every ten years by going through a process comprised of requirements similar to the initial acquisition of the lease – with a notice and comment period, etc. This has the negative effect of creating uncertainty in a mariculture company's business plan by drawing into question the viability of the company's capital assets after every 10 years. Because mariculture operations are expensive and require considerable initial investment, the present legal process makes it difficult to find and keep investments - in an Alaskan mariculture operation.

The Aquatic Farm Lease Act (HB115) would align the lease renewal process for aquatic farms and hatcheries with the lease renewal process for most other types of leases. This change would simplify and shorten the process, reduce workload on DNR staff (allowing them to address other aquatic farm lease applications more quickly), and provide businesses more certainty. The continued viability of Alaska's mariculture industry is reliant upon each industry's consistent and continued partnership with Alaska – in this case a reliable leasing process for offshore leases that is similar to other types of leases of state lands. We believe that Aquatic Farm Lease Act (HB115) accomplishes that objective and further provides certainty for mariculture operations so as to best run our Alaskan businesses.

With that, we request that the Aquatic Farm Lease Act HB115 be passed.

Sincerely,



Robert Desautel
President & CEO