



**Wild,
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Sustainable®**

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute

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March 24, 2021

Representative Ortiz
State Capital Room 513
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Support for HB 41

Dear Representative Ortiz:

Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) fosters economic development of Alaska's seafood resources. It plays a key role in positioning Alaska's seafood industry as a competitive market-driven food production industry and functions as a brand manager of the Alaska Seafood family of brands. Recognizing mariculture is an emerging maritime industry with tremendous opportunity for Alaska's coastal economies, ASMI supports HB 41.

Mariculture involves cultivating marine organisms in the ocean for food and other products such as oysters, mussels, abalone, or geoducks, as well as seaweeds, such as kelp. The practice does not require feed, fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides, or antibiotics, making it sustainable and inexpensive. Because of its economic and environmental promise, the Alaska Mariculture Task Force has identified the goal to build Alaska's mariculture production into a \$100 million per year industry in 20 years.

In order to increase jobs and economic opportunity for fishermen and Alaskan businesses, the ASMI Board of Directors unanimously supports HB 41 and legislative action to allow for the marketing of mariculture products or "aquatic farm products" as defined in Alaska Statute 16.40.199, which it is currently prohibited from doing. It is joined in support of this bill by the Alaska seafood industry, the Alaska Mariculture Task Force and the Alaska Shellfish Growers' Association, as well as many new Alaskan-owned and operated businesses.

Not only does mariculture present a significant economic opportunity for Alaska, it offers the ability for seafood companies to diversify their existing product portfolios. With the support and efforts of the Mariculture Task Force, small family businesses have already proven products to be commercially viable by selling boutique products while offering fishermen opportunities to utilize their vessels and skills on shoulder seasons.

If passed, ASMI plans to include mariculture products in its effective and lucrative consumer, retail, foodservice and food aid outreach, in domestic and targeted foreign markets. In efforts to ramp up this burgeoning industry, ASMI will lend the same expertise in outreach to this industry as it has to Alaska's seafood industry for 40 years.

Thank you for recognizing the value of Alaska's maritime economy and for your consideration of meaningful legislation to aid economic development across Alaska's coastal communities.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Woodrow, Executive Director
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute