

December 17, 2020

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to you regarding President Trump's May 7, 2020 Executive Order titled, "Promoting American Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth," which directs you to identify aquaculture opportunity areas in the U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ). As you seek to identify such areas, we request your consideration of designating waters around Alaska as an aquaculture opportunity area.

Our state has more than 30,000 miles of clean, pristine, nutrient-rich coastline, which produce more than 50 percent of the seafood in the United States. However, this ecosystem also produces much more than fish: kelp, seaweed, geoducks, clams, and many other species are also abundant. These species represent renewable resources that have long been crucial to subsistence and livelihoods of many Alaskans, and now we must prove our commitment to sustainability principles to ensure future generations will also enjoy these resources.

Alaska has all the qualities of an ideal environment for mariculture development: clean and abundant waters, hardy citizens with maritime experience, and an existing seafood industry and infrastructure. The state has research and development capacity at the University and industry level, as well as a sophisticated seafood marketing organization that effectively reaches consumers all over the nation and the world. The regulatory process and agencies are accessible, and the Legislature is on the verge of passing essential laws to help fund mariculture and allow expanded hatchery shellfish production.

In pursuit of a more resilient domestic food supply chain, we hope you agree that Alaska is a common-sense option for one of the first aquaculture opportunity areas under the Executive Order signed by President Trump. Alaskans prize their marine resources and have a solid history of following science for sustainable fisheries. We believe that mariculture development will bolster the economy of our state, and in particular the coastal communities where much of the seafood infrastructure and experience already exist.

Sincerely,



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