



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

No. 16-16

**Contact:** Katie Marquette, Press Secretary – (907) 269-7447  
Aileen Cole, Deputy Press Secretary – (907) 269-7458

**Governor Walker Signs Administrative Order to Diversify Alaska Economy with Mariculture Industry**

February 29, 2016 ANCHORAGE – Governor Bill Walker signed Administrative Order 280, establishing the Alaska Mariculture Task Force. With the vision to develop a sustainable mariculture industry producing shellfish and aquatic plants for the long-term benefit of Alaska’s economy, AO 280 directs the task force to present recommendations to the Governor on a long-term plan to advance the mariculture industry in Alaska.

“Mariculture represents a tremendous opportunity to diversify our economy, strengthen our coastal communities, and provide healthy food to the world by using sustainable practices that are a foundation of our current fishery resources,” said Governor Walker. “The goal of this task force is to bring key stakeholders together and determine how the state can help this industry prosper with Alaska-grown products.”

The Alaska Mariculture Task Force will be made up of stakeholders representing various regions and interests from across the state. Essential state agencies will also participate in the task force.

"Mariculture represents a huge opportunity to grow and diversify the state's economy" said Julie Decker, Executive Director of the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. "The Alaska Mariculture Task Force will help expedite the development of mariculture in a way that works for Alaskans, grows jobs, produces healthy food, and still maintains Alaska's reputation for sustainably managed fishery resources."

"Developing mariculture in Alaska has the potential to support restoration of struggling species as well as help grow community economies," said Heather McCarty of Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association.

The Alaska Mariculture Task Force is directed to present recommendations for a final comprehensive plan for the development of Alaska’s mariculture industry to the Governor, and will create no additional costs to the state. Task force members will represent varied interests of Alaskans from the Aleutian Islands to Southeast Alaska, and are committed to working together to develop solutions for the greater benefit of the state.

###