

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 26, 2013

Mr. Shawn Carey  
Grants Program Officer  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Alaska Region  
PO Box 21668  
Juneau, AK 99802-1668

Dear Mr. Carey:

I encourage your support of the application submitted by Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) for consideration under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Saltonstall-Kennedy Grants Funding Program for Fiscal Year 2013. AFDF proposes to bring together stakeholders in the Alaska mariculture industry and spearhead an *Alaska Mariculture Initiative* to grow the sector commercially as well as guiding restoration efforts for wild fisheries.

As you know, the Alaska mariculture sector has the potential for significant economic growth. Small farmers and cooperatives have already begun to work together to cultivate shellfish and bring them to market. I've seen first-hand the operations at the Kachemak Shellfish Growers Co-op's Homer Spit facility and can attest to the value of this industry and the potential for its growth in Alaska. With a plan, and with concentrated guidance, I am hopeful that the diverse groups with interests in Alaska mariculture will make real progress.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the application from the Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Clare Boersma in my Anchorage office at (907) 272-9108.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator