

Southeast Conference

Resolution 14-06

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE ALASKA MARICULTURE INITIATIVE

WHEREAS: The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations reports that, in 2010, world aquaculture production attained another all-time high (60 million metric tons worth \$119 billion) of which 20% was bivalves that were non-fed (or grown on food materials that exist naturally in their marine environment); and

WHEREAS: British Columbia reports that the shellfish growing industry provides over 1,000 full-time jobs in rural coastal communities and produces over \$33 million in annual sales across 16,000 miles of coastline; and

WHEREAS: Washington is the largest producer of farmed shellfish in the U.S. with annual sales values which exceed \$100 million, employing directly and indirectly over 3,200 people with over \$27 million in payroll and an estimated total economic contribution of \$270 million; and

WHEREAS: Alaska banned finfish farming, but allowed for shellfish farming with the passage of the Aquatic Farm Act in 1988; and

WHEREAS: Since 1988, Alaska's shellfish farming industry has struggled to grow with annual values between \$200,000 and \$600,000, and numbers of farms with sales between 10 and 30; and

WHEREAS: In 2011, NOAA adopted a *National Shellfish Initiative* to stimulate coastal economies and improve the health of estuaries through increasing commercial shellfish production and native shellfish populations in our nations waters; and

WHEREAS: Washington responded to NOAA with a *Washington Shellfish Initiative* to restore and expand shellfish resources through protection, restoration and enhancement efforts; and

WHEREAS: The document titled, *USDA Investment Strategy in Support of Rural Communities in Southeast Alaska (2011-2013)*, identified mariculture as an area consistent with its goals in the SE region and worthy of investment; and

WHEREAS: The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (ADCCED) published a draft *Alaska Mariculture Development Prospectus* in an attempt to establish a formal initiative focused on expediting the development of the mariculture industry; and

WHEREAS: The University of Alaska Sea Grant Marine Advisory Program consistently provides support to the shellfish farming industry through education, outreach and training; and

WHEREAS: Alaska's salmon enhancement program offers a comparison of the potential for mariculture to grow the economy of coastal Alaska; and

WHEREAS: In 2010-2012, hatchery salmon commercially harvested were worth approximately \$250 million, \$110 million, and \$150 million, respectively to fishermen; and

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WHEREAS: According to a recent economic study conducted for the Prince William Sound Aquaculture Association, the rate of return on investment from hatchery salmon in Prince William Sound is 271:1 for the State and 23:1 for commercial fishermen; and

WHEREAS: The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is spearheading an *Alaska Mariculture Initiative* which will complete the following objectives: broaden the vision and constituency of the mariculture industry from shellfish farming to also include restoration and wild fishery enhancement, coordinate efforts to develop the mariculture industry, convene a strategic planning conference in Alaska, develop a strategic plan, and gain a commitment by all participating agencies and stakeholders regarding implementation of the plan; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Southeast Conference supports the *Alaska Mariculture Initiative* as a coordinated strategic planning effort with a sound methodology, clear objectives and a reasonable expectation that it will facilitate expansion of the mariculture industry, leading to increased jobs and economic growth; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) will be updated to include support for the *Alaska Mariculture Initiative*; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

Copies of this Resolution will be sent to the Alaska Legislature, Governor Parnell, USDA Rural Development, NOAA, and Alaska's Congressional Delegation.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2013 AND DUE TO SUNSET ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2014

Witness:



Lori Blood
President
Southeast Conference

Attest:



Shelly Wright
Executive Director
Southeast Conference