

**A Resolution of the Haines Borough Assembly Supporting Efforts to Improve Competitiveness and Resilience of the Alaska Seafood Industry.**

**WHEREAS**, efforts to improve global competitiveness of Alaska commercial seafood have benefits to the entire seafood industry, including harvesters, processors, and support businesses, as well as communities and the state of Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska seafood comprises more than 60% of U.S. harvested seafood and is a critical part of food production for the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska seafood is also exported to about 100 countries; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska seafood is subject to global market factors directly affecting its value, whether it is sold in the U.S. or exported; and

**WHEREAS**, Alaska seafood currently faces exceptional national and global challenges including trade policy and non-reciprocal tariffs that favor other nations, high supply/inventory, high costs/inflation, reduced consumer demand, and global competitors that are less regulated, less sustainable, and/or have lower operating costs than domestic seafood producers; and

**WHEREAS**, these challenges affect the economic viability of fishermen, processors, and local communities dependent on fish landing taxes across the state of Alaska, and

**WHEREAS**, seafood is not fully integrated into USDA policies or programs designed to ensure domestic food security, supply chain integrity, and support for harvesting and processing businesses similar to other domestic protein sources; and

**WHEREAS**, the lack of domestic seafood recognition in U.S. trade policy objectives and priorities results in market conditions that reduce the value of Alaska seafood and accessibility to global markets, and creates an unlevel playing field; and

**WHEREAS**, current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend two to three servings of healthy seafood a week per person, yet domestic consumption rates remain less than half that level; and

**WHEREAS**, the Government Accountability Office issued a 2022 report finding that while nutritional guidelines recommend school-aged children receive between four and ten ounces of seafood per week, the National School Lunch Program only delivers roughly three ounces of seafood per year to these students; and

**WHEREAS**, 30% of duties collected on imported marine products is deposited into the Saltonstall-Kennedy (SK) Fund, 60% of which by law is designated to fund the SK grant program to promote and develop US-produced seafood, yet less than 5% is used to fund the SK grant program; and

**WHEREAS**, NOAA is currently creating an implementation plan for the National Seafood Strategy which necessitates collaboration across multiple national agencies that affect the viability of Alaska seafood; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal government's Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee issued the 2023 National Export Strategy that includes a chapter on Seafood Industries, highlighting forthcoming efforts to improve interagency coordination and global market competitiveness for domestic seafood producers;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Haines Borough Assembly supports efforts by the federal government to:

**Improve and expand existing agency functions that support US seafood, including:**

- Improve coordination and collaboration across multiple federal governmental agencies that affect the economic viability of Alaska seafood via the implementation plan for NOAA's National Seafood Strategy and Chapter 9 of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee's 2023 National Export Strategy
- Expand use of USDA Foreign Agricultural Service trade missions and other export market development assistance to include seafood
- Improve the efficacy (e.g., timing, scope) of and maintain or increase the use of government purchasing programs for Alaska produced seafood
- Improve the utility and applicability of governmental policies on recapitalization, vessel construction, tax structures, workforce accessibility, energy, and infrastructure
- Increase government funding for new product development, testing, promotion, and marketing of US produced seafood (e.g., NOAA's Saltonstall-Kennedy grant program)
- Strengthen government planning for and execution of fisheries science and management, especially as needed to improve our understanding of and response to climate impacts on living marine resources

**Integrate US seafood production into national food policy strategies and USDA programs designed to support domestic food production, including:**

- Create an Office of Seafood Policy and Program Integration within USDA to fully integrate US seafood into USDA policy strategies and programs designed to ensure domestic food security, supply chain integrity, and support for harvesting and processing businesses, similar to other terrestrial sources of protein; coordinate USDA seafood support programs with seafood-related programs of other agencies; and provide a point of entry for seafood producers to more effectively engage with USDA
- Increase re-investment in US seafood producers and related support businesses via expanding eligibility of USDA low-interest loans or loan guarantees to fishermen and processors
- Fully integrate seafood and seafood nutritional guidance into national strategies for improving public health and nutrition

**Restore fairness and reciprocity for international trade in U.S. seafood products, including:**

- Embed and improve seafood expertise and leadership in the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) to coordinate seafood trade objectives among USTR offices, coordinate USTR seafood trade programs with seafood efforts of other agencies, and provide a point of entry for seafood producers to more effectively engage with USTR
- Improve trade policy via USTR and other agencies to create a more reciprocal tariff structure for seafood exports and imports, reduce burden and risk associated with non-tariff barriers, and develop more effective tools for monitoring supply chain traceability and deterring Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing
- Resolve the unbalanced and unfair seafood trade relationship between Russia and the United States

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Adopted by a duly-constituted quorum of the Haines Borough Assembly on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2024.



Thomas C. Morphet, Mayor

Attest:



Alekka Fullerton, MMC, Borough Clerk

