

Alaska State Legislature



Date: September 24th, 2020

To: The Honorable Michael J. Dunleavy, Governor, State of Alaska

Re: Support for CARES Funding to Alaska's Seafood Processing Industry

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

We write today in strong support of Alaska's seafood processing industry. Specifically, we respectfully request that the State of Alaska reimburse processors for COVID-19 expenses to the fullest possible extent through available CARES funding.

Entering this past spring, there were serious doubts whether fisheries could be safely and successfully prosecuted during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bristol Bay in particular faced massive safety and logistical concerns.

The processing industry immediately went to work, collaborating with communities and the State to implement strict safety protocols and preventative measures, as well as rapid response and quarantine plans that protected Alaska's communities and allowed a critical segment of our economy to move forward.

The 2020 fishing season has been a remarkable success from the standpoints of bringing in a workforce and operating safely, responding to outbreaks, and enacting effective quarantine measures; however, the expenses borne by processors in doing so were considerable.

In a year when oil revenue and tourism faltered, Alaska's commercial fishing industry was a rare bright spot that supported our families and communities, as well as the State's coffers. We firmly believe that this success was due to, among other things, a herculean effort by the processing industry.

\$331.4 million of Alaska's CARES funding was allocated to the Department of Health and Social Services to support ongoing response and mitigation efforts, and we respectfully urge you to utilize a portion of this funding to reimburse processors to the highest possible degree.

Finally, with the duration of COVID-19 still unknown, there may be another such effort required by the processing industry in 2021. More than simply supporting processors, this funding would facilitate safe communities and strong coastal economies going forward.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

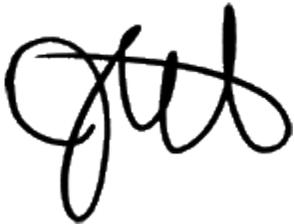
Sincerely,



Representative Louise Stutes
Chair, House Special Committee on Fisheries
House District 32



Representative Bryce Edgmon
Speaker of the House
House District 37



Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Co-Chair, House State Affairs Committee
House District 35



Representative Dan Ortiz
Vice-Chair, House Finance Committee
House District 36

Cc: Ben Stevens, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
Adam Crum, Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services