

Weatherly Bates

Dear State of Alaska,

During these unprecedented times we beg you to withdraw recommendations for shellfish growers to pay for testing fees at this time. With the outbreak of coronavirus we have suffered a 100% loss in business revenue with restaurants closing around the country and business at a stand still. With the uncertainty of how long this will last we are all in a position of difficulty, and many of our businesses will shut down. Food security is of utmost importance and we are committed to work through the crisis to grow food for the future without pay. We beg you to request federal or State funding for testing to help growers operate at lower costs once the outbreak subsides. Please do not pass legislation at this time that will further the burden on farmers that are already suffering and have to make the difficult choice of closing their operations. The State of Alaska has a Mariculture Task force with the intent to increase the Mariculture Industry in Alaska by 100 million dollars. How will this be possible without working together? As farmers we invest all of our savings then our revenues back into our businesses to grow the industry. It is now more important than ever that the State of Alaska protect small businesses from shutting down.

Sincerely, Weatherly Bates Alaska Shellfish Farms, LLC