A RESOLUTION OF THE SWAMC BOARD OF DIRECTORS SUPPORTING THE ALASKA MARICULTURE INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations reports that, in 2010, world bivalve mariculture production was worth nearly $24 billion – grown on food materials that exist naturally in their marine environment; and

WHEREAS, Alaska banned finfish farming, but allowed for aquatic farming of bivalves and marine plants with the passage of the Aquatic Farm Act in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Since 1988, Alaska’s marine farming industry has struggled to grow with annual values between $200,000 and $600,000; and

WHEREAS, The Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development 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, Alaska’s salmon enhancement program offers a comparison of the potential for mariculture to grow the economy of coastal Alaska, where In 2010-2012, hatchery salmon commercially harvested were worth approximately $250 million, $110 million, and $150 million, respectively to fishermen; and

WHEREAS, Bivalve mariculture and farming of aquatic plants could provide diverse social, environmental, and economic benefits for Alaska residents; and

WHEREAS, Aquatic plant culture can produce healthy foods and supplements, increase and preserve habitat for fish and invertebrates, and assist with bioremediation efforts in areas that contain excess nutrient loads; and

WHEREAS, The Alaska Fisheries Development Foundation (AFDF) is spearheading the *Alaska Mariculture Initiative* which will expedite the development of bivalve mariculture and marine plant farming; and

WHEREAS, AFDF is spearheading an *Alaska Mariculture Initiative* which will complete the following objectives: broaden the vision and constituency of the mariculture industry and marine plant farming, 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.

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BE IT RESOLVED that the SWAMC Board of Directors support the Alaska Mariculture Initiative as a method to facilitate expansion of commercial bivalve mariculture and marine plants farming, to increase jobs and economic opportunity for fishermen, farmers and support businesses in Southwest Alaska communities.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Southwest Alaska Municipal Conference Board of Directors this 15th Day of May, 2014.

IN WITNESS THERETO: ATTEST:

Alice Ruby, President Erik OBrien, Interim Director