



UNITED FISHERMEN OF ALASKA

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March 22, 2017

The Honorable Bill Walker
State of Alaska
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is a statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 34 Alaska commercial fishing organizations as well as individuals participating in fisheries throughout the state and its offshore federal waters. UFA works to promote and protect the common interest of Alaska's commercial fishing industry as a vital component of Alaska's social and economic well-being.

UFA supports your decision to rebuild a state initiative focusing on climate change policy. We are particularly concerned about warming ocean and stream temperatures as well as the related issues of ocean acidification (OA)--also a product of increasing atmospheric CO₂. While fishermen and the fishing industry are accustomed to adjusting to year-to-year variability in weather and marine conditions, climate change and OA have the potential to radically disrupt the state's fisheries economy and fishing communities in the long term.

Since 2009, when the State Climate Change Sub-Cabinet completed its work, there have been advances in research on ocean acidification in Alaska with important findings related to (1) changes in ocean chemistry leading to increasingly corrosive conditions, and (2) biological impacts to species and the marine food web. Further scientific research and monitoring of OA is critical to improving knowledge about how ocean acidification is affecting Alaska's fisheries resources, and to the fishing industry's capability to adapt to and mitigate potential changes in commercial productivity of marine resources.

In a 2016 UFA Salmon Habitat Information Program (SHIP) survey of fishermen, it was noted that climate change and OA ranked among the top three concerns. We appreciate the interest expressed in your 2017 State of the State speech to seek input from Alaska's industries as the climate change initiative develops. We look forward to addressing the combined issues of climate change and OA through this forum.

Sincerely,

Jerry McCune
President

Mark Vinsel
Executive Administrator