

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



March 25, 2022

To Whom it May Concern:

Members of the Alaska State Legislature's House Fisheries Committee would like to provide this letter of support for the Skipper Science Partnership. We enthusiastically support the mission, efforts, and vision of this grassroots, tribal-public-private partnership that is providing a much-needed platform for our fishing communities to record critical environmental and biological information that will inform fisheries research and management in a rapidly changing climate.

This program, which was successfully piloted in 2021 in Southeast and Bristol Bay, Alaska, has gained attention from multiple NOAA divisions including the Alaska Fisheries Science Center and Alaska Region. Skipper Science has proven to be an effective statewide data collection platform that is customized for the fishing community, including commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries, as well as the mariculture industry.

The Skipper Science program enables fishermen to report data such as number and condition of fish caught and released, hours worked, sea surface temperature, animal sightings and interactions, animal behaviors, stomach contents of fish caught, disease or parasite sightings, seabird bycatch, carcasses observed on the water or mass die-offs, fishing depths, etc. simply and easily from a smartphone or tablet while on the water. The program accommodates both repeated and standardized observations over the season and anomalous, opportunistic observations. Each observation is geo-tagged, providing precision to the observation.

This program, if implemented statewide, provides an unmatched opportunity to elevate and incorporate fishing community voices into the management and research of our State's incredibly valuable fisheries and marine ecosystems. We are excited to see a partnership of this kind develop and expand into a long-term funded program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Geran Tarr".

Representative Geran Tarr

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins".

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dan Ortiz".

Representative Dan Ortiz

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andi Story".

Representative Andi Story