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News Release

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USDA Partners With Denali Commission to Boost Mariculture in Alaska's Coastal Communities

PALMER, Alaska, June 20, 2024 – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Alaska State Director Julia Hnilicka today announced that USDA is partnering with the Denali Commission to grow the mariculture industry in Alaska's coastal communities.

“Rural Development is proud to be working in partnership with one of Alaska's greatest tools, the Denali Commission,” State Director Hnilicka said. “Aligning opportunities to encourage economic growth that reflects and honors the rich diversity, cultural heritage and natural resources of this region, while also helping to grow an industry that benefits all of Alaska.”

“The Denali Commission is honored to receive the USDA's trust and funding to advance mariculture projects in Alaska's coastal communities,” acting Federal Co-Chair Jocelyn Fenton stated. “This partnership underscores our shared commitment to fostering sustainable development, boosting local economies, and preserving the unique marine ecosystems of our region. Together, we are poised to unlock new opportunities for our communities, ensuring a prosperous and environmentally resilient future.”

The Denali Commission will work with groups that have the greatest potential to create scalable economic activity with a focus on Southeast Alaska, where USDA also has provided support through the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy and the Rural Partners Network.

USDA Rural Development is providing the Denali Commission \$3 million for the initiative. This funding will help community groups identify needs, define successes, and implement projects.

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities, create jobs and improve the quality of life for millions of Americans in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community facilities such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural, tribal and high-poverty areas. Visit the [Rural Data Gateway](https://www.ruraldatagateway.gov/) to learn how and where these investments are impacting rural America. To learn more, visit www.rd.usda.gov/ak. To subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit the [GovDelivery Subscriber Page](#).

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