

# Alaska State Legislature

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**Senator John Torgerson**  
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## **Bill Gives Boost to Alaska's Shellfish Industry**

(JUNEAU)—Sen. John Torgerson recently introduced legislation designed to boost the fledgling mariculture industry in Alaska.

The Kasilof Republican calls Senate Bill 141 “a step in the right direction, and supports mariculture growers who have done a good job developing a viable new industry.”

SB141 increases the number of sites available for mariculture farming and improves the site selection process. It also protects existing wild shellfish stocks located on a farming site by requiring growers to adhere to a harvestable surplus program.

SB 141 requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Department of Fish and Game to offer public leases on 60 suspended shellfish sites, 20 clam sites, and 10 geoduck sites. These leases are in addition to the permits already issued. The leasing program charges more for sites rich in harvestable shellfish and less for sites that are barren. If shellfish are located on the site, the farmer must harvest wild stock based on sustainable yield.

The Commissioner of DNR must solicit nominations from the industry before selecting sites for lease, and sites must not interfere with established commercial, subsistence or personal uses.

“The mariculture industry has proven successful in diversifying Alaska’s economy. SB 141 is a step in the right direction toward maintaining the existence and prosperity of shellfish farming. In addition, the bill protects the rights of others to have access to traditional clamming beaches,” said Torgerson.

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An excerpt from Senator John Torgerson in support of SB 141 is available on the Majority Actuality Line, 800-478-6540.