



Representative Ralph Samuels

House District 29

Sponsor Statement for House Concurrent Resolution 13

“Relating to the location of the State’s new seafood laboratory.”

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) State Seafood and Food Safety Lab is in a badly outmoded facility in Palmer where the lease will soon end. [House Concurrent Resolution 13](#) requests that DEC and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities move the lab to unused space at the Alaska Seafood Institute building in Anchorage, rather than spending more than \$14 million on a new stand-alone facility.

In 1993 the Alaska State Legislature provided AIDEA the bonding authority to construct and own a seafood manufacturing facility. The purpose of the plant is to provide value-added processing for Alaska’s seasonal and year-round fishing industry and to create new jobs for Alaskans.

The Anchorage facility was completed in 1999 and covers more than 250,000 square feet. AIDEA has retained ownership of the building, and partnered with a group of investors organized as Alaska Seafood Institute (ASI), to operate the facility. Subsequent changes in the membership of ASI has pushed back the opening date for the facility and produced a new business plan. When the doors open, ASI will not need the entire building for their processing operations, and has offered the additional space to the State Seafood Laboratory.

It makes fiscal sense to move the lab to unused space in a state facility rather than constructing a new building, especially in light of the current budget situation and the direction Governor Frank Murkowski has given to streamline state spending.