

# ALASKA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



January 29, 2018

Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

On behalf of the Alaska Pacific University, I am writing about HB233 and SB116, two companion legislative measures introduced in both the House and Senate to extend Alaska's Education Tax Credit program to January 1, 2025. The Education Tax Credit program is a mutually beneficial partnership for private industry, educational institutions, as well as the Legislature.

As you are aware, Alaska's Education Tax Credit program was first established in 1987 by the Legislature to encourage private businesses to make charitable contributions to support schools in Alaska. The program assists private industry by creating opportunities to donate to educational facilities and programs and in return businesses receive credits to offset their tax liabilities. In the case of Alaska Pacific University, the private industry donations also have reciprocal positive effects on workforce development and the business climate in Alaska. For example, the Fisheries, Aquatic Science, and Technology (FAST) Laboratory at Alaska Pacific University uses Education Tax Credit funds to train fisheries scientists for the Alaskan workforce; conduct applied research on topics of scientific, conservation, and management interest to the Fishing Industry; and assist State and Federal fisheries management agencies in fulfilling their mandates.

Educational institutions receive the benefit of these donations to help improve their facilities, programs, and expand educational opportunities for Alaskans. For instance, the FAST Laboratory uses Education Tax Credit funds to provide experiential learning opportunities to graduate and undergraduate students by participating in applied, community-based research projects throughout Alaska. The FAST Lab leverages the resources and partnerships generated by the Education Tax Credit to support Alaska rural and tribal communities seeking to better understand their fisheries and to support the development of engaging and applied curriculum for use in the public school system.

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Without these funds, such applied educational opportunities, and the consequent benefits to Alaskan communities, would be financially prohibitive and unavailable to students.

These contributions and benefits also assist the legislature by reducing the amount of fiscal appropriations that may be needed to support educational institutions and academic programs and natural resource management agencies in our State.

The Education Tax Credit program is a win-win for the educational institutions, children, and businesses in Alaska and it is critically important that we extend this very important program. The current program is due to sunset on December 31, 2018, and HB233 and SB116 will extend the program through January 1, 2025.

We respectfully request that you support HB233 and SB116 by passing the bills in this legislative session. The Education Tax Credit program has helped many young Alaskans prepare for life and their future in the job market, while at the same time providing our State with a stable, qualified and well-prepared work force. Research and education in Alaskan fisheries, marine biology, and environmental science programs are critical to maintaining a healthy state economy.

We thank you in advance for your support!

Sincerely,



Robert Onders, M.D., J.D., M.P.A.  
Interim President  
Alaska Pacific University



February 5, 2018

Alaska State Capitol Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing about HB233 and SB116, two companion legislative measures introduced in the House and Senate to extend Alaska's Education Tax Credit (ETC) program to January 1, 2025. This program was first established by the Legislature in 1987 to encourage private businesses to make charitable contributions to support schools in Alaska. This program produces world-class educational and employment opportunities for Alaska's students, promotes robust, synergistic partnerships between industry and education, and expands research capacity in strategically important topics.

I was lucky enough to be born and raised near Homer, Alaska. I commercially fished salmon in Prince William Sound and Upper Cook Inlet, served aboard an Alaska Department of Fish & Game research vessel, and captained an oil spill response vessel in the Beaufort Sea. Now I have the privilege of serving on the faculty of Alaska Pacific University, where I direct the Fisheries, Aquatic Science, & Technology (FAST) Laboratory. In this role, I am privileged to work with a team of excellent scientists, industry collaborators and highly motivated students.

The ETC program provides Alaska's students world-class education and research opportunities that produce a win-win situation for our educational institutions, students, and industries. As a professor, the ETC program allows me to advance research and educational outcomes in Alaska in four strategic ways:

- 1) *Recruit and support excellent students*- Natural resource sciences are competitive fields. The ETC funds provide tuition and project support to recruit and retain excellent undergraduate and graduate students.
- 2) *Invest in strategically important research areas*- The ETC program builds a critical link between academia and industry resulting in the development of applied research projects which directly address important research priorities for Alaska and lead to employment opportunities for graduates.

3) *Develop robust synergistic partnerships*- State, federal, industrial and private entities are facing rapidly evolving natural resource management challenges, including substantial budget uncertainty. The ETC provides a stable source of funding which triggers joint investments from state and federal agencies, non-governmental conservation organizations, and international science organizations. These investments lead to powerful collaborative networks that are resilient to variability in state and federal funding.

4) *Expand research capacity*- ETC funds create research and education opportunities which attract world-class scientists and educators to APU. Our students are working with top-tier researchers and educators from the University of Massachusetts, Northeastern University, University of Ulster (Northern Ireland), the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center, Florida International University, Northeastern University, Cornell University, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration, United States Geological Survey, International Pacific Halibut Commission, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, United States Fish & Wildlife Service, and AK Department of Fish & Game.

I have attached a list highlighting recent education and research outcomes produced by the ETC program at Alaska Pacific University. The ETC program has served to strengthen APU and Alaska's prominence in the natural resources fields of science here at home, nationally, and abroad in part through my own scientific and educational network. I am a graduate of Homer high school, I earned a B.Sc. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University, and a M.Sc. and a Ph.D. in Fisheries Oceanography from the University of Massachusetts. I am an Associate Professor at Alaska Pacific University, an Honorary Fellow at Ulster University in Northern Ireland, UK, and an Adjunct Professor at the University of Massachusetts School of Marine Sciences. I serve on the Scientific and Statistical Committee of the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council, the Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behavior of International Council for Exploration of the Sea / Food and Agriculture Organization, and the North Pacific Research Board's Science Panel.

The ETC program is working, and I respectfully request that you support HB233 and SB116 by passing the bills in this legislative session.

Sincerely,



Brad Harris, Ph.D.  
Director - Fisheries Aquatic Science & Technology (FAST) Laboratory  
Associate Professor - Alaska Pacific University

## **Education Tax Credit Program Outcomes (2005 to Present)**

### **– Alaska Pacific University –**

- *43 current Alaska Pacific University graduate students and graduate program alumni, all supported in by Education Tax Credit funds*
  - Graduate students have come from the following Alaska communities:
    - Homer
    - Dillingham
    - Anchorage
    - Kiana
    - Fairbanks
  - Graduate students and alumni currently work at the following businesses and agencies in Alaska or directly supporting Alaska:
    - US Geological Survey (USGS)
    - National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA: Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division)
    - US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS; Office of Subsistence Management; Fisheries Branch)
    - Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG; Commercial, Sportfish, and Wildlife Divisions)
    - University of Alaska Anchorage, Environment and Natural Resource Institute
    - Alaska Seafood Cooperative
    - Tyonek Tribal Conservation District
    - Homer Sport Charter Halibut Fleet
    - Alaska Resource Education
    - Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
    - Alaska Marine Conservation Council
    - Fairweather Science
    - United Research Services Corporation
    - Alien Species Control, LLC
  
- *60 undergraduate students with direct Education Tax Credit support have graduated from or are currently enrolled at Alaska Pacific University*
  - Undergraduate students have come from the following Alaska communities
    - Kodiak
    - Anchorage
    - Wasilla
    - Big Lake
  - Undergraduate students and alumni work at the following businesses and agencies in Alaska
    - Alaska Department of Fish and Game (Sportfish and Commercial Fish Divisions)
    - TechSea Inc.
    - US Coast Guard
    - Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
    - SGS North America Inc.
    - The Alaska Zoo

- *Projects/ opportunities made possible by Education Tax Credit funded collaborations*
  - North Pacific Essential Fish Habitat - fishing effects model (NOAA Habitat Conservation Division)
  - Impacts of barriers on juvenile Coho movements in Big Lake watershed (USFWS)
  - Quantifying seafloor contact of commercial fishing gear (NOAA Resource Assessment and Conservation Engineering)
  - Effects of Gold Mining on Norton Sound Red King Crab (Norton Sound Economic Development Corp, ADFG, NOAA Fisheries)
  - Student volunteers on NOAA research vessels
  - Improved understanding of Ichthyophonus infection in halibut (USGS)
  - Halibut Size-at-Age spatial-temporal assessment (International Pacific Halibut Commission (IPHC))
  - Halibut stress hormone research (IPHC)
  - Halibut discard mortality tagging studies (IPHC and FishNext Research)
  - Halibut spawning and maturity studies (IPHC)
  - English Bay Lakes salmon research (Community of Nanwalek, Chugachmiut)
  - Invasive species in ballast water (Smithsonian Institute)
  - North Pacific Research Board education curriculum (deployed in the ASD, currently in Bethel, AK)
  - Weathervane scallop assessments using CamSled (ADFG)
  - Pacific razor clam abundance surveys (ADFG)
  - Anchor and Ninilchik salmon weir installations (ADFG)
  - Student volunteers on ADFG research vessels
  - Improved methods for triploid induction (ADFG)
  - In-stream salmon movements on Nushagak River (ADFG)
  - Rockfish habitat mapping (ADFG)
  - Improved understanding of chinook smolt diet and condition (ADFG)
  - Weathervane scallop shell boring worm infection analysis (ADFG)
  - Pacific razor clam habitat and growth studies (ADFG)
  - Assessment of red king crab Savings Area efficacy (AK Seafood Cooperative)
  - Anchorage School District (ASD) Gifted Mentorship Program
  - Outreach programs in ASD Classrooms
  - Outreach programs at St. Mary's preschool
  - Outreach programs with Girl Scouts of America
  - National Ocean Science Bowl Judging Team