

**Tongass Coast Aquarium, Inc. Project Development**

**FY2007 Request: \$5,000,000**  
**Reference No: 40497**

**AP/AL:** Appropriation  
**Category:** Development  
**Location:** Ketchikan Gateway Borough  
**House District:** Ketchikan (HD 1)  
**Estimated Project Dates:** 07/01/2006 - 06/30/2011

**Project Type:** Planning  
**Recipient:** Tongass Coast Aquarium, Inc.  
**Contact:** Samuel Thomas  
**Contact Phone:** (907)465-2506

**Brief Summary and Statement of Need:**

A grant for the Tongass Coast Aquarium, which will be a regional facility providing education, research and exhibits focusing on the coastal and marine ecosystems of Southeast Alaska. This project contributes to the Department's mission of promoting a healthy economy and strong communities by providing educational opportunities and economic development in Southeast Alaska.

| <b>Funding:</b> | <b>FY2007</b>      | <b>FY2008</b> | <b>FY2009</b> | <b>FY2010</b> | <b>FY2011</b> | <b>FY2012</b> | <b>Total</b>       |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Gen Fund        | \$5,000,000        |               |               |               |               |               | \$5,000,000        |
| <b>Total:</b>   | <b>\$5,000,000</b> | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$0</b>    | <b>\$5,000,000</b> |

|   |   |                                       |   |                                   |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required | <input type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project | <input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway | <input type="checkbox"/> On-Going |
| 0% = Minimum State Match % Required           |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Amendment    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill           |                                   |

**Operating & Maintenance Costs:**

|                      | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Staff</u> |
|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| Project Development: | 0             | 0            |
| Ongoing Operating:   | 0             | 0            |
| One-Time Startup:    | 0             |              |
| <b>Totals:</b>       | <b>0</b>      | <b>0</b>     |

**Additional Information / Prior Funding History:**

Refer to the funding matrix in the detailed description.

**Project Description/Justification:**

Tongass Coast Aquarium (TCA) is a viable and exciting economic development project for both Ketchikan and Southeast Alaska. It is conceived as a regional educational, exhibition and research facility focusing on the coastal and marine ecosystems of Southeast Alaska. TCA will enhance marine resource-based industries by expanding research in the mariculture industry and capitalizing on seafood product education opportunities. The visitor industry will benefit from a splendid addition to local tour offerings as well as expanded opportunities for tour related concessions. In addition, TCA will increase the educational opportunities and quality of life.

**Theme:** TCA promotes the message of sustainable and responsible use of the marine environment. This is different from other aquariums that use conservation or preservation as a primary theme.

**Self Sustaining:** TCA will be self sustaining on a operational and capital replacement basis. The revenue stream from the visitor industry in addition to a revenue component from marine research will pay the annual cost of operations.

**Economic Impact:** The operation of the aquarium facility brings a substantial economic benefit to the Ketchikan and surrounding area through the employment of high quality, full time, year around jobs. This is a unique opportunity to capture the seasonal revenue stream and use it to sustain year around employment, education, research and improved quality of life.

- 38 full time equivalent jobs are directly connected to the operation of the aquarium in addition to the economic impact in the community.
- 102 full time equivalent jobs are created in the Ketchikan and southern southeast area.

- The long term growth of the Mariculture industry will be a huge economic benefit to all of Southeast Alaska. The investment in the initial starting of the research and focus on the growth of the industry will leverage a large economic return.

**Research:** The Mariculture industry needs a focal point for research. The TCA is ideally situated through its 501(c)(3) private non profit status to provide the participation of the private industry to focus and coordinate the research needed to move the Mariculture industry forward. The corporate structure and business organization model allows for direct research in addition to collaboration with the University, state and federal agencies, and private industry. The aquarium facilities are ideal to provide the physical structure and water supplies to conduct the necessary research projects that can leverage the growth of the mariculture industry.

**Education:** The education benefits from the project are three fold.

- One is the exposure of large numbers of visitors and students to the theme of sustainable and responsible use of the marine environment.
- The second address the need in this country for more students in the engineer and scientific fields. The aquarium is a prime facility to combine the use of marine resources with the scientific and engineering fields. The opportunity exists to integrate the aquarium facility and program into the education curriculum for Ketchikan and all of Southeast Alaska.
- The aquarium provides the basis for the University fisheries and marine science studies and graduate research programs, especially in the Mariculture field.

**Support:** The TCA Board has obtained local endorsement for this project from the City and Borough local governments, and support of the local Alaska Native organizations, tourism industry, education community, fishing industry and general public. The TCA volunteer board of directors has guided the development of the project over the last 12 years.

**Project Cost:** The current project cost estimates based on the conceptual design completed in 2004 are \$42,000,000. This estimate includes construction costs, design and architectural fees and the cost associated with managing the project and opening the doors to the aquarium upon the completion of construction. The project funding will be combination of funds from federal, state, local, visitor industry, individual contributors, private foundations, companies and non profit associations and entities.

**Time table:** The quickest to completion timetable:

- Design Development: 4-6 months January-April 2006
- Construction Blueprints 8-10 months May-January 2006
- Construction 14-18 months February 2007-May 2008

This is a winning project from all perspectives. It is economically sustainable, creates permanent year around jobs, captures and keeps seasonal visitor revenue in the local community, and promotes sustainable use of the marine environment to a large number of visitors from around the world.

**Funding History**

| Year    | Amount | Legislation                   |
|---------|--------|-------------------------------|
| FY 2006 | 50,000 | FSSLA 05 Ch 3 Page 12 Line 26 |