Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak • 312 W. Marine Way Kodiak, AK 99615 • (907) 531-5009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 9, 2025

Media contact: Tyler Agafonov, 907-261-4047, tagafonov@koniag.com

Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak Receives Major Grant to Expand Kelp Processing Infrastructure

Project Set to Create Jobs, Support Local Economy

KODIAK, Alaska — The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak is proud to announce that it has been awarded a $2.3 million grant dedicated to acquiring mariculture processing equipment.

This funding will help expand Kodiak's mariculture industry, creating jobs and supporting Sun'aq tribal citizens, kelp farmers in the Kodiak Archipelago, and the regional economy.

"Receiving this grant is a major milestone for our community," said Sun'aq Tribal Administrator Jeannine "JJ" Marsh. "It empowers us to help grow Kodiak's mariculture industry for future generations."

Koniag President Shauna Hegna added, "this grant represents a vital investment in Kodiak's economic future. It will help diversify the local economy, create jobs, and reinforce the region's position as a leader in Alaska's mariculture industry."

The investment will help the tribe develop a centralized, tribally managed processing facility tailored to the needs of Kodiak's kelp producers, known as the Kelp Primary Processing Platform, or KP^3.

The facility is envisioned as a shared regional asset that will benefit tribal citizens and independent farmers with support from community-based organizations.

"Leadership rooted in community and culture is essential to the success of projects like this," said Robbie Townsend Vennel, Kodiak Archipelago Leadership Institute's Executive Director. "We celebrate the Sun'aq Tribe's vision and dedication to helping to build a sustainable mariculture industry in our region.

"We look forward to working with the Sun'aq Tribe as this project helps lay the groundwork for a sustainable mariculture economy in Kodiak. By pairing new equipment with long-range planning and facility development, we can expand production, create jobs, and strengthen our community's future," said Melissa Schoenwether, Executive Director of the Kodiak Economic Development Corporation.

The funding comes at a critical time as Alaska's mariculture industry continues to grow but remains limited by the lack of local processing options, especially in communities like Kodiak. National and global leaders in mariculture are also voicing support for the project.

"We are excited to collaborate with the Sun'aq Tribe, kelp growers, the local community, and industry partners on this project. KP^3 will help pioneer a scalable model for local kelp processing," said Matthew Perkins, Founder & CEO of Macro Oceans, a California-based leader in innovative kelp products.

GreenWave, a nonprofit working to replicate and scale regenerative ocean farming, also praised the initiative.

"The Sun'aq Tribe's commitment to delivering value to diverse local stakeholders and emerging markets is exactly the kind of leadership needed to grow a resilient blue economy," said Samantha Garwin, GreenWave's Director of Market Development.

The tribe plans to begin equipment procurement this year with the goal of beginning initial operations in 2026.

###

The Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak empowers a sustainable future for its nearly 2,000 tribal members by embracing cultural wisdom to guide, protect, and enhance tribal lifeways. As a federally recognized tribe situated within the vibrant tapestry of the City of Kodiak, its roots run deep, spanning over 8,000 years of rich cultural heritage and profound connection to the land and sea. To learn more, visit sunaq.org.