

# Mothers of Millions

Seward, AK



# Development of a mobile kelp processor and harvesting platform to provide on-water support for Alaska's commercial kelp farmers

- Seaweed farmers in Southcentral Alaska face high logistical costs and limited access to stabilization and processing options, making it difficult to move kelp from remote farms to market.
- Mothers of Millions LLC (MOM) is developing a mobile, organic seaweed harvester and processor to meet farmers on-site, reducing transportation barriers and improving access to markets.



# Project Outcomes:

- **Regions Served:** Prince William Sound and Southeast Alaska
- **Farms Supported:** 4 farms total (3 in Prince William Sound; 1 in Southeast Alaska)
- **Total Biomass Processed:** ~11,000 kg wet weight kelp
- **Organic Certification:** All participating entities completed Oregon Tilth certification process (certificates issued or pending fall 2025)

## Market Outcomes:

- Developed a new agricultural market channel for stabilized kelp.
- Strengthened buyer relationships for future product demand.
- Supported continued farmer participation by providing direct processing and purchase agreements.



Spring 2024 harvest



Spring 2025 harvest



# Accomplishments to date:

- MOM completed the harvesting, processing, and stabilization of commercial kelp harvests throughout Prince William Sound.
- MOM supported farmers across Prince William Sound in initiating organic certification.
- Expanded operations to include work with an additional kelp farm in Southeast Alaska, purchasing part of their harvest.
- In response to a shifting commercial market, MOM pivoted from harvesting and freezing kelp (as originally proposed) to stabilizing kelp for use in the agricultural sector.
- This strategic shift aimed to build a relationship with a promising new buyer, with the long-term goal of supporting a sustainable, economically viable kelp industry beyond the Build Back Better grant.



# Challenges:

- Variations in kelp morphology from year to year and between farms required MOM to adapt its original processing and harvesting plans during the Spring 2025 harvest.
- Shifting markets requires the processor to be highly adaptable
- Accurately forecasting farmers' kelp harvest volume



## **Economic Feasibility and Market Data:**

- **Farmer Purchase Price:** Farmer purchase price depends on quality and quantity of harvest per farmsite.
- **Processing and Stabilization Costs:** Costs to harvest-assist, process, stabilize, and transport to the road system or to an end user south of the 46<sup>th</sup> parallel would be feasible at **\$.35 per wet pound for a minimum of 100,000 pounds of wet kelp**. After this harvest season, integrating the processing and transportation was deemed the most cost-effective approach.

## **Market Shift and Buyer Development:**

- MOM's decision to transition from frozen product trials to solution-based stabilization directly aligned with market signals in the agricultural sector.
- Working with a large-scale regional buyer allowed MOM and participating farmers to explore a long-term purchasing relationship that could establish stable pricing and purchasing agreements beyond the grant period.
- This approach, requested by participating farmers, is expected to provide a more durable economic pathway for continued kelp farming in Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.

# Questions?



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