



# FLORIDA SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION

December 3, 2018

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## RE: FSU Proposal for Funding

Dear Members of the Board for Triumph Gulf Coast, Inc.:

We write to you as the Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association Board of Directors, on behalf of the Florida shellfish growers and hatcheries throughout the state, to express our concerns about the request for Triumph funds for the Florida State University Marine Lab. We are opposed to this project for several reasons. One, we are opposed to any public university competing with already established private sector businesses. Florida has numerous private shellfish hatcheries operating in the state. The FSU proposal indicates that the funding would be used to produce oyster spat or seed for aquaculture and restoration. Private Florida businesses are currently producing oyster spat for those same purposes, and FSU would be directly competing with these private business by the terms of its proposal. We respectfully suggest that your Board consider other uses of the funds, in keeping with the guidelines for the Triumph awards, such as creating incentives for private sector businesses operating in the region to provide assistance and support. Second, we do not believe this funding request meets the criteria for Triumph awards, as the funding is supposed to be designated for economic purposes and job creation. This proposal does not meet the criteria. Finally, the Florida State lab has been in the region for decades and is operational as it is, and there may well be other sources of funding for research available to it and other universities. We simply do not believe that these funds have been designated for that purpose.

We are concerned that an award to the lab would actually result in a negative economic impact and fly in the face of the well-thought out guidelines for the funding awards. What was intended to aid could actually be detrimental if a public agency competes with private businesses.

Thank you for considering our position.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heath Davis".

Heath Davis  
Chair