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Press Release

SITKA SOUND SEAFOODS ANNOUNCES PROACTIVE TESTING AND MITIGATION STRATEGY TO ADDRESS POSITIVE SARS-CoV-2 CASES

Sitka, AK, August 18, 2021: Sitka Sound Seafoods (“Sitka Sound”), in partnership with the Alaska Department of Epidemiology, Public Health Nurse Denise Ewing, and the City and Borough of Sitka’s Acting Incident Commander, Rob Janik, are actively mitigating positive SARS-CoV-2 cases among workers at the plant. Sitka Sound’s primary concern is for the health and wellbeing of our employees, the local community, and our fishing fleet.

A handful of local Sitka residents who work at the plant tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 in mid-July. With a vaccination rate of approximately 80% at the plant, these were breakthrough cases of local employees who were fully vaccinated, a trend seen in Sitka and across the U.S. These cases came as the community of Sitka experienced a significant uptick in local cases.

Sitka Sound increased our routine testing to include all employees, regardless of vaccination status. Testing was recently accelerated to occur every three days for all employees. When testing the entire workforce over the weekend, additional positive cases were identified. Employees who test positive are isolated, and close contacts of positive employees are quarantined and will be retested, per Public Health guidelines. All employees are paid during isolation and quarantine periods.

We continue to take proactive safety measures more stringent than local, state and federal requirements including: encouraging and facilitating vaccinations for employees; implementing physical distancing where possible; installing barriers; providing employees with face coverings and requiring that they be worn at all times while at the plant; educating and training employees on COVID-19 prevention measures and symptoms; maintaining ventilation; performing routine cleaning and disinfection; staggering breaks; encouraging all employees – local and seasonal – to avoid gatherings, restaurants, bars and stores; and providing employees with isolation and quarantine pay.

Sitka Sound thanks the local community, Public Health Nurse Denise Ewing, SEARHC, Acting Incident Commander Rob Janik, and the Alaska Department of Epidemiology for their continued support. We thank our fleet for their understanding and flexibility. And we thank our employees who follow safety protocols and get vaccinated to protect themselves, their co-workers, and the community of Sitka.

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