CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 22(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/29/95
Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATOR HOFFMAN

A RESOLUTION

1 Requesting research on fisheries and marine mammals in the Bering Sea.

2 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 WHEREAS the Bering Sea is one of the most productive fishing areas in the world;
4 and
5 WHEREAS the harvest of fisheries resources in the Bering Sea totaled 4,740,000,000
6 pounds in 1993 and 4,600,000,000 pounds in 1994; and
7 WHEREAS the harvest of fisheries resources in the Bering Sea was worth
8 $843,000,000 to commercial fishermen in 1993 and $893,000,000 to commercial fishermen
9 in 1994; and
10 WHEREAS fish and marine mammals from the Bering Sea are a principal source of
11 subsistence foods for the communities of western Alaska; and
12 WHEREAS the abundance of northern sea lions has declined by 70 percent since
13 1959; and
14 WHEREAS the productivity of northern fur seals on the Pribilof Islands has declined
15 significantly since 1960; and
16 WHEREAS the abundance of shellfish in the Bering Sea has declined precipitously
17 in recent years resulting in a closure of the Bristol Bay red King crab fishery in 1994 and in
reduction in the abundance of Tanner crab to less than a third of 1991 population levels; and

WHEREAS the biomass of pollock in the Aleutian Basin and western Bering Sea has declined substantially in recent years due to overfishing and continues to decline despite a closure of pollock fishing in the "Donut Hole" area since 1992; and

WHEREAS certain western Alaska chum salmon stocks have declined during the last five years in spite of a five-fold increase in the total abundance of salmon in western Alaska since the early 1970s; and

WHEREAS the biomass of arrowtooth flounder and other flatfish has increased significantly (up to a ten-fold increase for some species) in the eastern Bering Sea since the early 1970s;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Congress to provide funding to the appropriate federal agencies and institutions to conduct studies of the Bering Sea ecosystem to discover the causes of and to make recommendations for addressing the dramatic changes occurring in the abundance of fish and marine mammals in the Bering Sea; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the Congress direct the National Marine Fisheries Service to work with federal and state agencies, and institutions whether public or private, to ensure that efforts are not duplicated and studies are not redundant in addressing this important issue.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Bob Dole, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.