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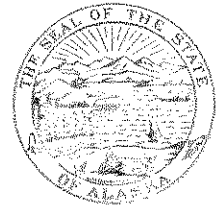
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House District 38

Kuskokwim & Johnson Rivers

Kuskokwim Bay & Nelson Island



House Joint Resolution 15

"Relating to collaboration with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories through the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region and its Arctic Caucus to address common issues."

The Arctic Caucus was formed in November 2009 as an informal group of legislators, government officials, business leaders, and leaders of nonprofit organizations committed to the responsible development of North America's Arctic regions, including Alaska, Northwest Territories, and the Yukon. The Arctic Caucus is now a working group within the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), a statutory public-private partnership which promotes economic development between three Canadian provinces, two territories and five American states, including Alaska. Alaska was a founding member of PNWER in 1991. The Arctic Caucus is designed to facilitate communication and cooperation among the Arctic Caucus member jurisdictions.

The Arctic Caucus held its first Leadership Forum in Barrow, AK Dec. 1-3, 2010. This meeting was attended by six Alaska legislators, key officials from the US and Canada, and leadership from Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Issues on which the Arctic Caucus has agreed to focus on include:

- Increasing cooperation on scientific research and vessel tracking
- Exploring strategies to reduce tension between local users and industry
- Identifying bi-national economic development opportunities through tourism
- Regional infrastructure and partnership development
- Exploring increased cooperation in emergency and disaster preparedness, and
- Increasing coordination of search and rescue efforts.

This resolution encourages the Alaska Legislature to collaborate with the legislative assemblies of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories through PNWER and its Arctic Caucus to facilitate communication and cooperation among the Arctic Caucus member jurisdictions and, as a result, to more effectively address common problems.

Notably, the Arctic Caucus will also strive to promote a synchronized message detailing the common needs of the Arctic Caucus member regions to their respective federal governments and emphasizing that coordinated United States and Canadian federal policies are vital for the well-being of the region's citizens.

This resolution's final resolve calls on "the governments of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to join Alaska in an enduring alliance to pursue the common goals of their regions." We feel the time has come for such an alliance and are confident it will be embraced by our closest Canadian neighbors. We further hope and expect that the Alaska Legislature will welcome this spirit of northern camaraderie and support this resolution as a vehicle toward increased cooperation in the Arctic.