

Representative Bob Herron

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House District 37
Kuskokwim Bay • Western Bristol Bay • Alaska Peninsula
Aleutian Chain • Bering Sea Islands • Bethel

Adak
Akutan
Atka
Attu Station
Bethel
Chignik
Chignik Lagoon
Chignik Lake
Clark's Point
Cold Bay
Eek
Egegik
False Pass
Goodnews Bay
Ivanof Bay
King Cove
Mekoryuk
Nelson Lagoon
Nikolski
Perryville
Pilot Point
Platinum
Port Heiden
Portage Creek
Quinhagak
Sand Point
St. George
St. Paul
Togiak
Twin Hills
Ugashik
Unalaska

Sponsor Statement

HJR 24

HJR 24 "Urging the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; requesting that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council; and supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission."

It is important that Alaska and the United States priorities for the Arctic Council chairmanship align. HJR 24 asks the U.S. Department of State to consider Alaska's priorities during its Arctic Council Chairmanship beginning in 2015, and to consult Alaskan officials before appointing an individual to lead the Arctic Council. The resolution also asks the Legislature to support the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission's strategic recommendation in their January 30, 2014 preliminary report to: "Continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in Working Groups and by building partnerships with Permanent Participants".

In December 2012, Governor Parnell proposed four sensible priorities for the State Department's consideration for the United States to concentrate on during its Arctic Council Chairmanship: creating jobs and economic opportunity for Arctic residents; suicide prevention; developing safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for smaller, isolated Arctic communities; and safe, secure, reliable maritime shipping. The Legislature will work with the Governor and the U.S. Department of State to address these and other Alaskan priorities during the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

HJR 24 also asks that the United States Department of State "work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council." It's Alaska's geographic location that makes the U.S. an Arctic nation, and Alaska requests to be consulted in this appointment that will so greatly affect her future.

And finally, should HJR 24 be approved by both Houses, the Legislature would formally be on record as supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, including in particular continuing to "pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in working groups and by building partnerships with permanent participants."