



Representative Chris Tuck

House Democratic Leader

Alaska State Legislature

District 23 - Representing Dimond Estates, Foxridge, Taku, Campbell, Northwood and Windemere



Sponsor

Statement

House Joint Resolution 23: Ask Congress to Stop Illegal Crab/ Salmon Fishing

Russian-caught Illegal, Unreported & Unregulated (IUU) crab and salmon fishing has negatively affected Alaskan fisheries for several decades. In recent years, international attention towards the issue has caused a slight decrease in illegal catches since its highpoint in 2005. However, this decrease was reversed in 2012, when a large resurgence of illegal fishing activity began both in Russia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and international waters adjacent to Russia's EEZ.

Russian-caught illegal crab and salmon fishing has hurt legally operating Alaskan fisheries by reducing overall seafood prices. IUU fishing vessels don't adhere to the strict regulatory guidelines that Alaskan fisherman must follow. As a result of this unregulated fishing, many commercial seafood populations in Russia's EEZ have been decimated. Russia's inability to control illegal fishing in their EEZ has resulted in lower overall commercial seafood stocks in Alaskan waters, due to over-fished marine populations that migrate from Russian waters to the waters in Alaska.

Illegal fishing is severely affecting one of Alaska's most important industries and threatens the livelihood of thousands of Alaskan families.

This House resolution urges the U.S. Congress to better coordinate efforts to reduce IUU fishing with the Russian Federation and other major maritime trade partners. Additionally, this resolution urges the U.S. Congress to do the following actions:

- Immediately pass H.R. 774: Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2015, currently being considered in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Make the necessary changes to U.S. importation laws by requiring "whole cooked" and "cooked crab sections" to be subject to Country of Origin (COOL) labeling requirements and to ensure all imported seafood entering U.S. markets be fully traceable to verify illegal sources.
- To support the recommendations asked for by the Presidential Task Force report on Combating IUU fishing and Seafood Fraud.
- To increase public education and awareness of the harms of illegal, unreported and unregulated international crab and salmon harvesting and the negative effects it has on local, state and national economies.

Please join me in protecting Alaskan families from illegal outside forces so we can continue to help make our commercial fisheries stronger for the enjoyment of many future generations.

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