

29th Alaska State Legislature

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Senator Lesil McGuire

Sponsor Statement

SJR 16 “Arctic Economic Council”

SJR 16 “Expressing support for the Arctic Economic Council; and requesting that the United States Congress express support for the Arctic economic Council, for the chair of the Arctic Economic Council to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic Economic Council Leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council.”

The Arctic Council was established by the Ottawa Declaration of 1996 to function as a high-level intergovernmental forum to promote cooperation, coordination, and interaction across the Arctic. The Arctic Economic Council was established in 2012 by the Arctic Council. The Arctic Economic Council is in charge of fostering business development in the Arctic, engaging in deeper circumpolar cooperation, and providing a business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council.

SJR 16 urges the federal government to work to empower residents of Alaska, especially indigenous residents, as partners in the Arctic Economic Council. It asks the Alaskan State Legislature to express its confidence in, and support for, the Arctic Economic Council. The United States will become chair of the Arctic Council in 2015. This resolution states that it is the intent of this legislature to have the chairmanship to the Arctic Economic Council parallel the chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

I urge you to support this resolution emphasizing the importance of the Arctic, and the role that Alaskans will play in shaping its future.