



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2017-13

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE IN SUPPORT OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALASKA STATUTES 30.30 AND 05.25, IMPROVING THE MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION OF DERELICT VESSELS

WHEREAS, hundreds of derelict vessels currently litter Alaska's coastline and harbors and these numbers will increase every year unless action is taken to address aging fleets and changing commercial fisheries; and

WHEREAS, in the past year alone, there have been numerous derelict vessel situations that have cost the state, municipalities and the federal government, considerable expense, including two ex-Navy tugs in Adak, abandoned barges in Steamboat Slough near Bethel, and the tug Challenger that sank off Juneau; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the widespread costs and the environmental and navigational risks for both municipalities and the state, associated with derelict vessels; and

WHEREAS, neighboring states have dramatically strengthened their derelict vessel prevention laws in the past five years to better prevent, track and manage derelict vessels, including raising fees to support state management of derelict vessels and requiring vessel insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the Alaska Legislature passed a resolution acknowledging the need to better understand and address the existing and growing problem of derelict vessels around the state; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has outdated statutes regarding derelict vessels which lack the ability to track vessel owners, agency enforcement authority, statewide coordination of response, funding or vessel insurance requirements; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, the Alaska Clean Harbors program convened an ad-hoc derelict vessel task force at the urging of the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators which includes representatives from state and federal agencies, as well as the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, regional tribal representatives, federal and state legislative offices, and private industry; and

WHEREAS, over nine full-day meetings, the task force developed thoughtful, robust and meaningful proposed changes that will help all stakeholders around the state, including harbor facilities better address and prevent derelict vessels; and

WHEREAS, these changes will protect municipal harbor infrastructure, keep valuable moorage space in harbors available, and will prevent unsustainable economic, environmental and navigational hazards; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes will improve communication and coordination between Alaska's harbors and state and federal agencies, directly leading to decreased costs associated with managing derelict vessels.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League fully supports the passage by the State Legislature, of all proposed revisions in Alaska Statutes 30.30 and 05.25.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 18th day of November, 2016.

Signed: 
Mayor Clay Walker, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: 
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League