

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS

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Sponsor Statement for HJR 15

The Port of Alaska provides over half of Alaska's inbound marine freight such as fuel and cargo. It also supports four major United States Department of Defense installations, including Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Fort Wainwright, Eielson Air Force Base, and Fort Greely. All four installations are undergoing critical expansions for fighter jet and missile defense capacity, and the necessary material for these projects is entering the state primarily through the Port of Alaska. Chosen as one of the Department of Defense National Strategic Seaports, the Port of Alaska is vital to the security of Alaska and the contingent United States. Through these means, the Port of Alaska is able to support critical economic activities inside and outside of the state.

The Port of Alaska needs major renovations to remain operational. The Port of Alaska has implemented tariff increases on consumer and businesses, but they are inadequate to pay for the necessary improvements. Additional funding is needed to ultimately replace the pilings and docks, without which our military bases will not be able to receive necessary materials and/or deploy if necessary.

The resolution would ensure that the Port of Alaska remains operational and continues to support the large and ever-growing military population of Alaska as well as the operations at the four major United States Department of Defense installations. HJR 15 would also ensure that the Department of Defense will augment existing public and private funding.