

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

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**Legislative
Resolve No.**
51



Establishing the Cook Inlet Salmon Task Force as a joint legislative task force.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS art. VIII, sec. 2, Constitution of the State of Alaska, mandates that Alaska's resources be managed for the maximum benefit of its people; and

WHEREAS Southcentral Alaska has the highest concentration of population in the state, and Cook Inlet is located in Southcentral Alaska; and

WHEREAS the sport fishing community is a vital part of the local and statewide tourism industry, and the Cook Inlet region sustains 55 percent of the statewide sport and personal use fishing effort; and

WHEREAS the economic contribution to the state of the in-river sport and personal use fisheries in Cook Inlet far exceeds the ex-vessel value of the Cook Inlet commercial fishing harvests; and

WHEREAS the Department of Fish and Game has repeatedly failed to successfully manage the competing goals of maximizing the commercial fishing harvest of Central District salmon stocks and meeting minimum escapement goals in the Northern District; and

WHEREAS the Yentna River has failed to achieve the minimum escapement goal

during six of the last nine years, despite the Department of Fish and Game's and the Board of Fisheries' lowering the minimum escapement goals on two separate occasions; and

WHEREAS the Board of Fisheries, in accordance with the sustainable salmon management policy, declared Susitna drainage sockeye salmon a yield stock of concern, but failed to take action to reduce the commercial harvest of those stocks; and

WHEREAS the Department of Fish and Game has failed to provide a comprehensive management and research strategy to reduce allocative conflict within Cook Inlet;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-Fifth Alaska State Legislature forms the Cook Inlet Salmon Task Force composed of 10 legislators: five members from the senate appointed by the president of the senate and five members from the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the president of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the task force; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall examine the conservation and allocation issues in fisheries management of Cook Inlet; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall examine the economic effect of Cook Inlet salmon and the maximum benefit of those salmon to the people of Alaska; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall examine the legal and constitutional issues of a buy-back program, reducing the number of commercial fishing permits in Cook Inlet; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Cook Inlet Salmon Task Force shall submit a report of its findings to the legislature on the first day of the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Sixth Alaska State Legislature, which must include

(1) the short-term and long-term uses of Cook Inlet salmon consistent with the maximum benefit principle contained within art. VIII, sec. 2, Constitution of the State of Alaska;

(2) specific proposals to address the conservation issues in the Northern District; and

(3) options to reduce allocative conflict in Cook Inlet, which may include a buy-back program; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is terminated on February 1, 2009.