

# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2004

**Source**

CSHJR 44(RES) am

**Legislative  
Resolve No.**

49



Relating to research into the decline of the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter in the western Gulf of Alaska.

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

**WHEREAS** the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter in the western Gulf of Alaska may have declined as much as 65 percent since the mid-1970s; and

**WHEREAS** the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter is found in the nearshore water of the Aleutian Islands, the Alaska Peninsula, and the Kodiak Archipelago; and

**WHEREAS** the United States Fish and Wildlife Service has recently proposed to list the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter as threatened under the Endangered Species Act; and

**WHEREAS** commercial fishing activity in the western Gulf of Alaska may be restricted if the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter is listed under the Endangered Species Act; and

**WHEREAS** coastal communities of western Alaska, and the State of Alaska, as a whole, are heavily dependent upon the revenue generated by commercial fishing in the

adjacent nearshore water of the western Gulf of Alaska; and

**WHEREAS** Kodiak, a major commercial fishing port of the United States, is located in the western Gulf of Alaska, the area of the sea otter population decline; and

**WHEREAS** the cause of the decline in abundance of the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter is unknown; and

**WHEREAS** long-term studies are necessary to assess changes in the population of sea otter off Alaska and to determine the extent of variability in sea otter population levels; and

**WHEREAS** previous surveys of sea otter population levels off western Alaska have been sporadic and asynchronous;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the United States Congress provide \$5,000,000 a year over the next five years to conduct research into the abundance of the Northern Sea Otter and the cause of the decline of the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter in the western Gulf of Alaska; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that research regarding the Southwest Alaska population of the Northern Sea Otter be centered in Kodiak with field stations located in the coastal communities of western Alaska where the Northern Sea Otter occurs.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Gale Norton, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Steve Williams, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Ted Stevens, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate and member of the Alaska delegation in Congress; the Honorable James M. Inhofe, Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works; the Honorable Richard W. Pombo, Chair, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources; Margaret Roberts, President and Chair, Alaska Sea Otter and Steller Sea Lion Commission; and to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.