

STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2005

Source
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Legislative
Resolve No.
61



Recommending that certain federal funding restrictions be eased so that more villages in Alaska would qualify for assistance relating to flooding and erosion.

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

WHEREAS Alaska is bordered by the Pacific and Arctic Oceans along 33,000 miles of coastline, and an estimated 12,000 rivers flow across the state, providing an abundant source of food, jobs, and recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS many Alaska communities have been established near these bodies of water, affording easier commerce and access, but also increasing the chances that lives and property can be threatened by erosion and floods; and

WHEREAS the United States General Accounting Office published a report in December 2003 entitled, "Alaska Native Villages: Most Are Affected by Erosion, but Few Qualify for Federal Assistance," in which the office reported that 184 communities in the state experience some level of erosion and flooding; and

WHEREAS the General Accounting Office finds that villages that seek funding for projects to address flooding and erosion from the United States Army Corps of Engineers often fail to qualify for assistance because economic costs exceed the expected benefits under

the applicable guidelines; and

WHEREAS the General Accounting Office finds that four communities--Kivalina, Koyukuk, Newtok, and Shishmaref--"are in imminent danger from flooding and erosion and are making plans to relocate" at a cost of several hundred million dollars; and

WHEREAS the General Accounting Office describes the relocation process as "daunting" and recommends that the United States Congress consider alternatives that would enhance existing federal programs for control and prevention of erosion and flooding; and

WHEREAS the General Accounting Office suggests that the federal government should consider waiving cost-sharing requirements for some projects and should authorize the bundling of funds from various federal agencies to help endangered communities; and

WHEREAS many communities in the state that are endangered by erosion and floods have a wealth of public investments that should be protected, including schools, roads, airports, harbors, military installations, and communications facilities;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the federal government to ease the strict cost and benefit analysis rules associated with federal assistance for flood and erosion damage, as discussed by the United States General Accounting Office in its report, and expeditiously move to help communities in the state that are threatened by erosion and flooding.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable John Paul Woodley, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works); the Honorable P. Lynn Scarlett, Assistant Secretary, Policy Management and Budget, U.S. Department of the Interior; the Honorable Michael Liu, Assistant Secretary, Public and Indian Housing, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and the Honorable Jeffrey Staser, Federal Co-Chair, Denali Commission; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.