

STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2005

Source
CSHJR 15(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.
10



Relating to open ocean aquaculture in the federal exclusive economic zone.

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

WHEREAS Alaska wild fish stocks are healthy and sustainable, in large part due to a strong gene pool and Alaska's history of sound fisheries management, clean water, and habitat protection; and

WHEREAS Alaska commercial, subsistence, and recreational fisheries are managed to achieve the state's constitutional mandate of sustained yield; and

WHEREAS the State of Alaska enacted legislation in 1990 to prohibit finfish farming in state waters; and

WHEREAS there are numerous outstanding issues and concerns regarding the social, economic, health, and environmental consequences of farmed fish, both in state and federal waters; and

WHEREAS open net cage fish farming poses persistent risks to the health of the marine resources of Alaska; and

WHEREAS there are patents pending to cultivate and introduce genetically modified fish into open waters, which will pose a direct threat to wild stock fisheries; and

WHEREAS salmon farming has had severe economic impacts on coastal communities in Alaska as demonstrated by significantly lower prices for wild salmon fisheries products; and

WHEREAS Alaska coastal communities and fishing families rely on the health of wild fish stocks for a strong economy; and

WHEREAS global markets increasingly demand natural seafood products harvested sustainably from a clean environment; and

WHEREAS the seafood industry in Alaska has developed strong name recognition in the marketplace for wild, natural, and healthy seafood products; and

WHEREAS successful seafood marketing depends on product differentiation, and Alaska's untarnished name is its greatest asset in the global market; and

WHEREAS the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is promoting legislation to permit open ocean aquaculture in federal waters from three to 200 miles offshore of the states; and

WHEREAS the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act provides for input from fishermen and coastal communities through regional fishery management councils; and

WHEREAS the proponents of federal open ocean aquaculture and members of the ocean aquaculture industry have not satisfactorily demonstrated that this activity will not be detrimental to the ocean resources and to the economy of Alaska coastal communities; and

WHEREAS Governor Frank H. Murkowski has proposed a five-year moratorium on all permitting, leasing, or development of ocean pen-reared shellfish and finfish in the federal exclusive economic zone off Alaska;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature is committed to ensuring that open ocean aquaculture does no harm to ecosystem integrity, to existing wild fisheries, or to the social and economic well-being of Alaska coastal communities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature opposes open ocean aquaculture for finfish and predatory shellfish; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges Congress to prohibit the issuance of any license to permit an aquaculture facility that imports, exports, possesses, cultivates, sells, or otherwise handles genetically modified fish in the

federal exclusive economic zone or has access to open waters; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports the regional fishery management councils under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act and respectfully requests that the councils be granted authority over any proposals regarding open ocean aquaculture in federal waters; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States Congress to require any federal proposal to authorize open ocean aquaculture in the federal exclusive economic zone to undergo a legislative environmental impact statement, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States; the Honorable Ted Stevens, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate and member of the Alaska delegation in Congress; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, United States Secretary of Commerce; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.