

# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

## 2015

### Source

HCS CSSJR 16(RLS)

### Legislative Resolve No.

21



Expressing support for the Arctic Economic Council and the United States Arctic Economic Council delegation; requesting that the United States Congress express support for the Arctic Economic Council, for the chair of the Arctic Economic Council to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic Economic Council leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and encouraging the United States Congress to cooperate with the state on matters related to and under consideration by the Arctic Economic Council.

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

**WHEREAS** the United States is a member nation because of the Arctic region of this state; and

**WHEREAS**, during the United States chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the chair of the Arctic Economic Council should be a resident of the state; and

**WHEREAS** the structure of the Arctic Economic Council leadership should mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS** the Arctic Council was established by the Ottawa Declaration of 1996 to function as a high-level intergovernmental forum to promote cooperation, coordination, and interaction across the Arctic, with the involvement of the indigenous communities and people of the Arctic, and with a focus on sustainable development and environmental protection of the Arctic; and

**WHEREAS** the United States of America, the Russian Federation, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Kingdom of Denmark, including Greenland and the Faroe Islands, Iceland, and Canada are all member nations of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS** the Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council include the Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Aleut International Association, the Gwich'in Council International, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Saami Council, and the Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North; and

**WHEREAS** the indigenous people of the state are represented in four of the six Permanent Participant organizations; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2013, Canada assumed the chair of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS**, on August 23, 2012, Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, appointed Minister Leona Aglukkaq as the chair of the Arctic Council during the chairmanship of Canada; and

**WHEREAS** Minister Aglukkaq is the first indigenous person to serve as chair of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS**, like the residents of the state and the Alaska State Legislature, Minister Aglukkaq recognizes the importance of responsible economic, natural, and human resource development, as well as the importance of a healthy environment; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of this understanding, Minister Aglukkaq took a leadership position in creating the Arctic Economic Council; and

**WHEREAS** the Arctic Economic Council is charged with fostering business development in the Arctic, engaging in deeper circumpolar cooperation, and providing a business perspective to the work of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS** the Arctic Economic Council has the same members as the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS** Alaskans Drue Pearce, Gail Schubert, Lori Davey, and Bruce Harland

represented the United States at the inaugural meeting in Iqaluit; and

**WHEREAS** indigenous resident Tara Sweeney represented the Inuit Circumpolar Council as a Permanent Participant at the inaugural meeting in Iqaluit and was elected as the United States representative on the executive committee of the Arctic Economic Council; and

**WHEREAS** the federal government had no official presence at the inaugural meeting of the Arctic Economic Council, and the entire United States delegation was made up of residents of the state; and

**WHEREAS** the United States Arctic Economic Council delegation, consisting of three state business representatives and resident Permanent Participants, is working to secure the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Economic Council to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and

**WHEREAS**, if the United States Arctic Economic Council delegation is successful in its efforts, an Alaskan will be the incoming chair of the Arctic Economic Council in April 2015; and

**WHEREAS**, as residents of an Arctic state, Alaskans realize the importance of balancing responsible economic development of natural and human resources and environmental stewardship; and

**WHEREAS** residents of the state living in the Arctic, as well as indigenous residents of the state, rely on the land and the sea to sustain traditional lifestyles and have a wealth of traditional knowledge that could be incorporated into the policies that affect the Arctic; and

**WHEREAS** residents of the state, including indigenous residents of the state, rely on revenue from responsible economic development to maintain schools, roads, communities, and essential public service infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the importance of the Arctic Economic Council in providing a forum for residents of the state to give input on policies and guiding principles regarding economic development in the Arctic; and

**WHEREAS** the state holds a strategic position as the gateway to the Arctic and will benefit from the efforts of the Arctic Economic Council;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature seeks to empower the United States Arctic Economic Council delegation, which consists entirely of residents of this state; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its confidence in and support for the Arctic Economic Council; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the United States Congress express support for the Arctic Economic Council, for the chair of the Arctic Economic Council to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic Economic Council leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the United States Congress to cooperate closely with the state on all matters related to and under consideration by the Arctic Economic Council.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John F. Kerry, United States Secretary of State; David Balton, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, United States Department of State; Julia Gourley, Senior Arctic Official, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, United States Department of State; Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., Special Representative for the Arctic, United States Department of State; Fran Ulmer, Special Advisor on Arctic Science and Policy, United States Department of State; Craig Fleener, Special Assistant on Arctic Policy, Office of the Governor; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.