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SJR 20 Clean Up Marine Debris Sponsor Statement Version N

Alaska's culture revolves around a healthy ocean and ecosystem, the ocean provides us with food, jobs, and tradition. Alaskans use the ocean to provide for themselves every single day.

Foreign trash floating through Federal water collects in remote areas where it pollutes beaches and kills wildlife. Distance, expense, and rugged conditions make cleanup a challenge. Allowing marine debris to continue to collect around the state's shorelines is detrimental to our way of life.

Since 2006, NOAA has directly funded projects in Alaska that have removed over two million pounds of debris. Federal agencies like NOAA and the EPA can continue to help Alaska get on track to clean up the state's waters. The state of Alaska has an estimated 44,000 miles of shoreline, almost as much as the entirety of the United States combined. Based on the estimate of shoreline, only around 6% of the coastline in Alaska has been cleaned since efforts begun.

It is extremely difficult to properly dispose of marine debris after removal, leaving communities with messes they did not create. SJR 20 urges the Alaska Congressional Delegation to advocate for increased federal funding to support marine debris cleanup, backhaul, prevention, and education.

We urge members support of SJR 20. This Foreign debris must not trash Alaska any longer!