

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE

Welcoming the Arctic Council Task Force for Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response to the state for its March 2012 meeting and urging the task force to use its time in the state to inform and inspire the work of the task force.

The Arctic Council consists of eight Arctic Nations: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States as well as six international organizations representing Arctic Indigenous Peoples. The Arctic Council was established in 1996 as a high level intergovernmental forum to provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

On May 12 of 2011, the Arctic Council signed the Nuuk declaration which established an agreement on cooperation in aeronautical and maritime search and rescue in the arctic. In the Nuuk declaration, the Ministers of the Arctic Council member states decided to "establish a Task Force, reporting to the senior Arctic Officials, to develop an international instrument on Arctic marine oil pollution preparedness and response, and called for the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) and other relevant working groups to develop recommendations and/or best practices in the prevention of marine oil pollution.

The purpose of Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 17 is to welcome the Arctic Council Task Force for Arctic Marine Pollution Preparedness and Response to Alaska. The task force will be in Alaska in March of 2012 to exchange information and experiences regarding marine pollution preparedness and response. The task force is currently developing a framework for international cooperation between the eight arctic states to combat oil spill pollution.

As the only arctic state in the nation, Alaska has an important role to play in protecting the arctic. As host for the March task force meeting, it is important that the State welcome the international delegates to Alaska and highlight the issues that are important to Alaskans. The timely passage of SJR 17 will accomplish both of these objectives and I encourage your support.

February 7, 2012