

Representative Bob Herron

Rep.Bob.Herron@akleg.gov

State Capitol • Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Phone: (907) 465-4942 • Fax: (907) 465-4589



House District 37

Kuskokwim Bay • Western Bristol Bay • Alaska Peninsula

Aleutian Chain • Bering Sea Islands • Bethel

Adak

Akutan

Atka

Attu Station

Bethel

Chignik

Chignik Lagoon

Chignik Lake

Clark's Point

Cold Bay

Eek

Egegik

False Pass

Goodnews Bay

Ivanof Bay

King Cove

Mekoryuk

Nelson Lagoon

Nikolski

Perryville

Pilot Point

Platinum

Port Heiden

Portage Creek

Quinhagak

Sand Point

St. George

St. Paul

Togiak

Twin Hills

Ugashik

Unalaska

Sponsor Statement

HJR 24

HJR 24 "Urging the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; requesting that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council; and supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission."

It is important that Alaska and the United States priorities for the Arctic Council chairmanship align. HJR 24 asks the U.S. Department of State to consider Alaska's priorities during its Arctic Council Chairmanship beginning in 2015, and to consult Alaskan officials before appointing an individual to lead the Arctic Council. The resolution also asks the Legislature to support the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission's strategic recommendation in their January 30, 2014 preliminary report to: "Continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in Working Groups and by building partnerships with Permanent Participants".

In December 2012, Governor Parnell proposed four sensible priorities for the State Department's consideration for the United States to concentrate on during its Arctic Council Chairmanship: creating jobs and economic opportunity for Arctic residents; suicide prevention; developing safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for smaller, isolated Arctic communities; and safe, secure, reliable maritime shipping. The Legislature will work with the Governor and the U.S. Department of State to address these and other Alaskan priorities during the U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

HJR 24 also asks that the United States Department of State "work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council." It's Alaska's geographic location that makes the U.S. an Arctic nation, and Alaska requests to be consulted in this appointment that will so greatly affect her future.

And finally, should HJR 24 be approved by both Houses, the Legislature would formally be on record as supporting the strategic recommendations of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, including in particular continuing to "pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in working groups and by building partnerships with permanent participants."