

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**BY SENATOR MCGUIRE**

**Introduced: 2/25/15**

**Referred: Senate Special Committee on the Arctic**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Expressing support for the Arctic Economic Council; and requesting that the United**  
2 **States Congress express support for the Arctic Economic Council, for the chair of the**  
3 **Arctic Economic Council to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic**  
4 **Economic Council leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8           **WHEREAS**, on August 23, 2012, Steven Harper, Prime Minister of Canada,  
9 appointed Minister Leona Aglukkaq as the Chair of the Arctic Council during the  
10 chairmanship of Canada; and

11          **WHEREAS** Minister Aglukkaq is an Inuk from Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada; and

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

14          **WHEREAS** Minister Aglukkaq recognizes that environmental stewardship must be  
15 balanced with responsible development of natural and human resources; and

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

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

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

23          **WHEREAS** the Arctic Economic Council held its inaugural organization meeting in  
24 Iqaluit, Nunavut, Canada, on September 2 - 3, 2014; and

25          **WHEREAS** representatives from member countries of the United States of America,  
26 the Russian Federation, Finland, Norway, Sweden, the Kingdom of Denmark, Iceland, and  
27 Canada attended the inaugural meeting in Iqaluit; and

28          **WHEREAS** representatives from the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, Arctic  
29 Athabaskan Council, Gwich'in Council International, the Saami Council, and the Russian  
30 Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North represented the Permanent Participants at the  
31 inaugural meeting in Iqaluit; and

1           **WHEREAS** Alaskans Drue Pearce, Gail Schubert, Lori Davey, and Bruce Harland  
2 represented the United States at the inaugural meeting in Iqaluit; and

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

6           **WHEREAS** the federal government had no official presence at the inaugural meeting  
7 in Iqaluit; and

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

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

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

18           **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature recognizes that Alaskans need both  
19 responsible economic development and environmental stewardship to continue to thrive,  
20 especially in the Arctic; and

21           **WHEREAS** Arctic indigenous people, including indigenous residents of the state,  
22 rely on the land and the sea to sustain traditional lifestyles; and

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

26           **WHEREAS** Arctic indigenous people, including indigenous residents of the state,  
27 have a wealth of traditional knowledge that could be incorporated into the policies that affect  
28 the Arctic; and

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

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

3           **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature seeks to empower the United States Arctic  
4 Economic Council delegation, which consists entirely of residents of this state; and

5           **WHEREAS** the federal government should work to empower residents of the state,  
6 especially indigenous residents of the state, as partners in the Arctic Economic Council;

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

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

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