

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 23

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES TUCK, Drummond

Introduced: 4/7/15

Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting the goals of the Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported,**
2 **and Unregulated Fishing and Seafood Fraud; urging the United States Congress to**
3 **finalize a bilateral agreement with the Russian Federation to address illegal, unreported,**
4 **and unregulated fishing harvests in North Pacific waters, to pass the Illegal, Unreported,**
5 **and Unregulated Fishing Enforcement Act of 2015, and to require that all imported**
6 **seafood sold in the United States be fully traceable to its country of origin; and calling**
7 **on the federal administration and the United States Congress to act to increase public**
8 **awareness of the harm done by the international trade in illegal, unreported, and**
9 **unregulated seafood.**

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

11 **WHEREAS**, in 2012, 40 percent of the global king crab catch was illegally taken by
12 unregulated Russian fishing vessels and other unregulated vessels flying "flags of
13 convenience," effectively threatening fisheries statewide; and

1 **WHEREAS** between four and 16 percent of the annual global salmon catch is
2 illegally caught; and

3 **WHEREAS** the high levels of bycatch from illegal and unregulated vessels
4 participating in high seas driftnet fishing threaten vulnerable marine populations that are vital
5 to domestic fisheries; and

6 **WHEREAS** illegal crab and salmon floods global food markets, causing low prices
7 that negatively affect legal harvesters of crab and salmon in the state; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in 2012, the price for Alaska king crab suffered a 25 percent decrease
9 because of a surplus of illegal crab in the market from Russian waters; and

10 **WHEREAS** the international seafood market has experienced an influx of illegally
11 caught crab from Russian waters and the international waters adjacent to the Russian
12 exclusive economic zone, resulting in an approximate 40 percent decline in ex-vessel prices
13 for crab in the last three years alone; and

14 **WHEREAS**, since 2000, the Alaska crab market has lost an estimated \$600,000,000
15 because of illegal Russian vessel crab harvests; and

16 **WHEREAS** the unauthorized and illegal Russian crabbing market has an estimated
17 value of \$700,000,000 a year; and

18 **WHEREAS**, between 2003 and 2005, the quantity of Russian-caught, illegal, and
19 unregulated sockeye salmon alone had an estimated value of between \$40,000,000 and
20 \$74,000,000; and

21 **WHEREAS** illegal crab and salmon fishing encourages overexploitation of
22 international marine populations; and

23 **WHEREAS** the amount of illegal crab caught in Russian waters and international
24 waters adjacent to the Russian exclusive economic zone is frequently twice the official, legal
25 total allowable catch; and

26 **WHEREAS** salmon caught illegally in the Russian Far East routinely exceeds 50
27 percent of Russia's official total allowable catch; and

28 **WHEREAS** the populations of certain species of salmon in areas of the Russian Far
29 East have been reduced by 90 percent, primarily as a result of illegal fishing; and

30 **WHEREAS** unregulated and illegal crab and salmon harvesting vessels have an
31 operating advantage over vessels legally permitted in Alaska fisheries, which are subject to

1 significant conservation and safety regulations; and

2 **WHEREAS** regulated legal domestic fisheries must share commercial marine
3 populations with foreign governments by cause of natural migration patterns, meaning that the
4 overfishing of crab and salmon populations in the Russian exclusive economic zone may
5 result in fewer crab and salmon to be harvested in the state;

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
7 Congress to finalize a bilateral agreement with the Russian Federation designed to better
8 coordinate efforts between our nations to address illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
9 harvests in North Pacific waters; and be it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
11 Congress immediately to pass H.R. 774, the Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing
12 Enforcement Act of 2015, which, among other provisions, includes the necessary changes to
13 domestic law to implement fully the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's
14 Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and
15 Unregulated Fishing; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
17 Congress to pass legislation that requires all imported seafood sold in the United States to be
18 fully traceable to verify illegal sources of seafood and to pass legislation that includes king
19 and tanner whole cooked crab and cooked crab sections in the list of bioresource imports
20 subject to Country-of-Origin Labeling requirements; and be it

21 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the goals of the
22 Presidential Task Force on Combating Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing and
23 Seafood Fraud, particularly through coordinated efforts to strengthen enforcement by entities
24 including the United States Coast Guard, the United States Department of Commerce, and the
25 U.S. Customs and Border Protection and to expand partnerships with state governments and
26 industry; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
28 Congress and the federal Administration to increase public education and awareness of the
29 harms of illegal, unreported, and unregulated international crab and salmon harvesting and its
30 negative effects on local, state, and national economies.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of

1 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
2 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of
3 Representatives; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; and
4 the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the
5 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.