

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16(ARC)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARCTIC

Offered: 3/20/15

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS MCGUIRE, Giessel, Coghill, Stevens, Bishop, Costello, Dunleavy, Olson, Ellis, Gardner, Egan, Hoffman, Micciche, Stedman, Kelly

A RESOLUTION

1 **Expressing support for the Arctic Economic Council and the United States Arctic**
2 **Economic Council delegation; requesting that the United States Congress express**
3 **support for the Arctic Economic Council, for the chair of the Arctic Economic Council**
4 **to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic Economic Council**
5 **leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and urging the**
6 **United States Congress to empower residents of the state as partners in the Arctic**
7 **Economic Council.**

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

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

11 **WHEREAS**, during the United States chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the chair of
12 the Arctic Economic Council should be a resident of the state; and

13 **WHEREAS** the structure of the Arctic Economic Council leadership should mirror
14 the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and

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

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

9 **WHEREAS** the Permanent Participant organizations of the Arctic Council include the
10 Inuit Circumpolar Council, the Aleut International Association, the Gwich'in Council
11 International, the Arctic Athabaskan Council, the Saami Council, and the Russian Association
12 of Indigenous Peoples of the North; and

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

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

16 **WHEREAS**, on August 23, 2012, Steven Harper, Prime Minister of Canada,
17 appointed Minister Leona Aglukkaq as the chair of the Arctic Council during the
18 chairmanship of Canada; and

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

21 **WHEREAS**, like the residents of the state and the Alaska State Legislature, Minister
22 Aglukkaq recognizes the importance of responsible economic, natural, and human resource
23 development, as well as the importance of a healthy environment; and

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

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

29 **WHEREAS** the Arctic Economic Council has the same members as the Arctic
30 Council; and

31 **WHEREAS** Alaskans Drue Pearce, Gail Schubert, Lori Davey, and Bruce Harland

1 represented the United States at the inaugural meeting in Iqaluit; and

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

5 **WHEREAS** the federal government had no official presence at the inaugural meeting
6 of the Arctic Economic Council, and the entire United States delegation was made up of
7 residents of the state; 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** residents of the state living in the Arctic, as well as indigenous residents
19 of the state, rely on the land and the sea to sustain traditional lifestyles and have a wealth of
20 traditional knowledge that could be incorporated into the policies that affect the Arctic; and

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

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

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

29 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature seeks to empower the United
30 States Arctic Economic Council delegation, which consists entirely of residents of this state;
31 and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its confidence
2 in and support for the Arctic Economic Council; and be it

3 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
4 the United States Congress express support for the Arctic Economic Council, for the chair of
5 the Arctic Economic Council to be a resident of this state, and for the structure of the Arctic
6 Economic Council leadership to mirror the rotation of the chair of the Arctic Council; and be
7 it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
9 Congress to empower residents of the state as partners in the Arctic Economic Council.

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