

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1982

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HJR 74

Legislative
Resolve No.

5



Requesting the Secretary of Commerce to disapprove certain portions of the Bering-Chukchi Sea Fishery Management Plan.

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

WHEREAS the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has prepared and sent to the Secretary of Commerce a Fishery Management Plan for Bering-Chukchi Sea herring; and

WHEREAS the stocks of Bering-Chukchi Sea herring have not fully recovered from overharvesting by foreign trawl and gillnet fisheries during the 1960's and 1970's; and

WHEREAS, because very little is known about the management of herring stocks, they have been subject to extreme fluctuations and overharvest worldwide; and

WHEREAS the Bering-Chukchi Sea herring plan provides that, in years in which commercial sac roe fishermen and subsistence fishermen harvest less than the optimum yield of the fishery in Alaska coastal waters, herring may be harvested on the high seas; and

WHEREAS the best scientific information available has revealed that discrete stocks of herring spawn in separate areas along Alaska's Bering Sea coast during the spring, but that the stocks commingle northwest of the Pribilof Islands along the Continental Slope during the winter; and

WHEREAS a high seas harvest of these mixed stocks does not allow for management of the discrete stocks by either the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or by the National Marine Fisheries Service; and

WHEREAS mixed stock fisheries unreasonably jeopardize the smaller, individual stocks of herring that spawn north of Cape

Newenham, especially if the guideline harvest for these stocks has been harvested inshore and are then subject to additional harvest on the high seas; and

WHEREAS the subsistence herring fishery along the Alaska coast is the most important food source for the villagers of Nelson Island and is a supplement to the diets of other villagers along Alaska's Bering Sea coast; and

WHEREAS the coastal commercial sac roe harvest is an important source of income for the cash-poor villagers along Alaska's Bering Sea coast, as well as an important fishery for other residents of Alaska and other states; and

WHEREAS sac roe herring harvested inshore by hundreds of small U.S. fishing boats and processed by dozens of domestic processors contributes far more to the U.S. economy than the same amount of food and bait herring harvested by a small number of large trawlers and processed by foreign factory ships; and

WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature is responsible for the health and welfare of the people and resources of Alaska;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its disapproval of those portions of the Bering-Chukchi Sea Fishery Management Plan that provide for a high seas herring fishery; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of Commerce is respectfully requested to disapprove those portions of the plan that provide for a high seas herring fishery, and return the plan to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of Commerce is respectfully requested to direct the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to rewrite those portions of the plan that deal with a high seas harvest of herring so as to advise against an offshore allocation until scientific information clearly demonstrates that a high seas fishery of discrete stocks would not harm the inshore fishery.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary of Commerce; Mr. William G. Gordon, Assistant Administrator of Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U. S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U. S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.