

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1988

Source

Legislative
Resolve No.

CSHJR 70(Res) am S

94



Relating to the need for ice-capable ships for Arctic research.

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

WHEREAS the renewable resources of the American Arctic, specifically fish and shellfish, represent one of the nation's greatest commercial assets with the value of the Bering Sea fisheries alone being estimated at \$2,000,000,000 per year; and

WHEREAS the American Arctic is a vitally important rearing and feeding ground for bottomfish, king crab, and a majority of the salmon stocks that serve as cornerstones for a large number of subsistence activities in the state; and

WHEREAS the biological and physical characteristics of the American Arctic are important with respect to producing large numbers of fish and shellfish in the area and in determining optimal opportunities for harvesting the fish and shellfish; and

WHEREAS the American Arctic has been defined by the U.S. Congress in the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 to include bodies of water that are of great importance to Alaska, such as the Bering Sea, the Chukchi Sea, and the Arctic Ocean; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Research Commission has reported to the President and the Congress that research in the Arctic Ocean and marginal seas is vital not only to the management of renewable resources but also to national security, prediction of weather and climate, and development of nonrenewable resources; and

WHEREAS the commission also reported that most Arctic-rim countries possess Arctic technologies far more advanced than those currently available in the United States, which threatens our national security and severely affects the ability of United States citizens to compete in the development of the resources of

the Arctic; and

WHEREAS the types of research needed to increase our understanding of the structure of the ecosystems of the Bering Sea, the Beaufort Sea, and the Chukchi Sea include elements related to physical features such as ice edges and hydrographic structures; and

WHEREAS the United States does not have the ships required to conduct this research, especially since the deactivation of the U.S. Coast Guard Icebreaker "Glacier"; and

WHEREAS several foreign icebreakers are currently idle because of the downturn in the oil industry, and one of these vessels might be modified and put under charter to meet immediate needs; and

WHEREAS sponsorship of currently neglected research in basic oceanographic science is a necessary and proper function of the federal government in order to fulfill national objectives in Arctic research;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the United States Congress to authorize

(1) construction of new icebreaking vessels for use in Arctic research;

(2) upgrading of at least one of the planned U.S. Navy additions to the fleet or construction of an additional vessel capable of Arctic research; and

(3) immediate leasing, or leasing with an option to buy, of a foreign icebreaker for use in connection with Arctic research.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Donald P. Hodel, Secretary of the Department of the Interior; the Honorable Jim Wright, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; 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.