

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 54

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES VEZEY, Ryan, Williams

Introduced: 1/30/98

Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries, House Special Committee on World Trade and State/Federal Relations

A RESOLUTION

1 Relating to establishing maritime boundaries with Canada.

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

3 WHEREAS Alaska has extensive boundaries with Canada; and

4 WHEREAS Alaska has an abiding interest in promoting ongoing friendship with
5 Canada in commerce, tourism, transportation, culture, resource utilization, and other matters;
6 and

7 WHEREAS the concept of maritime boundaries between countries was established for
8 the United States in 1976 for fishery zones and in 1983 for exclusive economic zones; and

9 WHEREAS Alaska has the potential to have coterminous maritime boundaries with
10 the federal government at the northern coastal boundary in the Arctic Ocean, the seaward
11 boundary with the Plover Islands in the Arctic Ocean, and the southern coastal boundary in
12 the Pacific Ocean, including Dixon Entrance; and

13 WHEREAS Alaska has property rights to seabeds off the coast under the United States
14 Submerged Lands Act of 1953; and

15 WHEREAS a maritime boundary agreement has not been established with Canada for
16 these coastal boundaries or for the Pacific Ocean coastal boundary between Washington and
17 Canada; and

1 **WHEREAS** the absence of maritime boundaries results in the unfortunate potential for
2 disputes over fishing rights, mineral rights, transportation rights, commercial rights, and other
3 rights of the parties involved due to the ongoing uncertainties; and

4 **WHEREAS** the federal government has for many years established maritime
5 boundaries with other surrounding countries, including Mexico in 1976, Cuba in 1978,
6 Venezuela in 1980, and Russia in 1990; and

7 **WHEREAS** the federal government has established a maritime boundary with Canada
8 between Maine and Nova Scotia under a legal case decided by the International Court of
9 Justice in 1984; and

10 **WHEREAS** active negotiations have not been announced by the federal government
11 for establishing maritime boundaries with Canada for the coastal boundaries with Alaska or
12 Washington; and

13 **WHEREAS**, in any negotiation of a maritime boundary with Canada that affects the
14 sovereignty, territory, jurisdiction, or property of Alaska, representatives of Alaska must
15 participate in the negotiations and Alaska must have the right to approve the provisions;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges

17 (1) the federal government to initiate discussions with the government of
18 Canada for the purpose of establishing maritime boundaries with Alaska; and

19 (2) the federal government to include, in any negotiations over these maritime
20 boundaries, representatives of Alaska on the negotiating team, and, for any agreement
21 affecting the sovereignty, territory, jurisdiction, or property of Alaska, to recognize the right
22 of Alaska to approve the provisions; and

23 (3) the federal government to ensure that, in order to pursue the public interest,
24 provisions be made for public input and hearings during the negotiating process; and

25 (4) the Governor of Alaska and the Alaska delegation in Congress to pursue
26 the sentiments of this resolution vigorously with the executive branch of the federal
27 government.

28 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the
29 United States; the Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, U.S. Secretary of State; the Honorable
30 Jesse Helms, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable
31 Benjamin A. Gilman, Chair of the U.S. House Committee on International Relations; the

1 Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Ranking Minority Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on
2 Foreign Relations; the Honorable Lee H. Hamilton, Ranking Minority Member of the U.S.
3 House Committee on International Relations; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
4 Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
5 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.