

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 46(FSH)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Offered: 3/19/02

Referred: Resources

Sponsor(s): HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to the moratorium on fish farming in British Columbia.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** fishing is not just a business in Alaska, it is a way of life; and

4 **WHEREAS**, when Alaskans fought for statehood, control of our fisheries was a major
5 issue; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Government of British Columbia, whose economic decisions affect
7 the Alaska economy and environment both directly and indirectly, announced on January 31,
8 2002 that the provincial moratorium on fish farming would be lifted; and

9 **WHEREAS** seafood is Alaska's number one export; and

10 **WHEREAS** the commercial fishing industry in Alaska is the state's largest private
11 sector employer; and

12 **WHEREAS** Alaska produces 90 - 95 percent of the commercial harvest of wild
13 salmon in the United States; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 2001, there were 29,000 accidental releases of farmed salmon from
15 British Columbia salmon farms; and

16 **WHEREAS** farmed Atlantic salmon are the largest bycatch by British Columbia

1 fishermen and escaped farmed Atlantic salmon have been caught in Alaska commercial
2 fisheries; and

3 **WHEREAS** escaped farmed salmon are competing with native Alaska wild salmon
4 for food; and

5 **WHEREAS** disease transfers have been documented from farmed salmon to native
6 wild salmon; and

7 **WHEREAS** escaped Atlantic salmon from salmon farms in British Columbia are now
8 spawning in approximately 80 streams; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Pacific Salmon Treaty with Canada has provisions for the protection
10 of habitat and the safe passage of fish; and

11 **WHEREAS** escaped Atlantic Salmon are a threat to Alaska's marine environment and
12 the ecology of Pacific salmon; and

13 **WHEREAS** Canada is now entering into finfish farming of halibut and sablefish; and

14 **WHEREAS** the long-term health of Alaska's wild salmon stocks, as well as halibut
15 and sablefish, is of vital economic and cultural importance and is a major policy priority of
16 the State of Alaska;

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests the government of
18 British Columbia to reinstate the moratorium on fish farming until Alaskans can be assured
19 that all possible steps have been taken to preclude further escapes of farmed fish from British
20 Columbia waters; and be it

21 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the
22 United States Department of State, while negotiating trade agreements with Canada and in the
23 arena of the Pacific Salmon Commission negotiations on the Pacific Salmon Treaty, to
24 consider the numerous negative effects that farmed salmon from British Columbia have on the
25 economy, environment, and fishing industry of Alaska.

26 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Gordon Campbell, Premier,
27 Government of British Columbia, Canada; the Honorable John van Dongen, Minister of
28 Agriculture, Food, and Fisheries, Government of British Columbia, Canada; the Honorable
29 Colin Powell, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable Don Evans, United States
30 Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Ann Veneman, United States Secretary of
31 Agriculture; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.

1 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
2 delegation in Congress; and to the members of the Pacific Salmon Commission.