

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 28
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR AUSTERMAN

Introduced: 2/19/02

Referred: Resources, Finance

A RESOLUTION

1 **Establishing the Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the salmon industry is one of the cornerstones of the Alaska economy,
4 supporting tens of thousands of jobs, and salmon is one of our most valuable foreign export
5 commodities; and

6 **WHEREAS** the global salmon market has changed considerably in recent years,
7 placing the Alaska salmon industry in economic peril and threatening not only the main
8 engine of the rural economy of the state but also a significant contributor to urban economies;
9 and

10 **WHEREAS** imports of farmed salmon from nations with a significantly cheaper labor
11 market are causing harmful revenue losses to the state's general fund and to municipal
12 budgets; and

13 **WHEREAS** current inventories of canned Alaska salmon are expected to remain full
14 well beyond the upcoming salmon season, and a large portion of the fleet-wide production is
15 processed into cans; and

16 **WHEREAS** hundreds of harvesters are in danger of actually being without markets

1 and being forced into bankruptcy this year; and

2 **WHEREAS** numerous salmon processing facilities have recently ceased operations or
3 plan to do so before the 2002 salmon fishing season due to market factors and difficulty in
4 obtaining operating loans; and

5 **WHEREAS** Alaska wild salmon is a renewable resource that is becoming
6 increasingly unique in the global market and can provide immeasurable economic benefit to
7 this state into perpetuity; and

8 **WHEREAS** allocation issues between commercial fishers and sport fishers are
9 becoming more problematic all the time;

10 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature establishes the Joint Legislative
11 Salmon Industry Task Force to address those elements of the crisis in the Alaska salmon
12 industry that can be solved through governmental policy; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall also address those elements of the
14 crisis in the Alaska salmon industry that can be solved through action on the part of the
15 industry; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall develop a long-term vision for the
17 Alaska salmon industry as a critical element of the state's economic future; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force include

19 (1) recommending specific means, by which state government can assist one
20 of the state's most important industries to adapt to changing economics in the most efficient
21 and effective way possible;

22 (2) recommending public policy options that account for effects on the dozens
23 of communities that are severely affected by the crisis in the Alaska salmon industry;

24 (3) finding areas of potential improvement to the seafood transportation
25 infrastructure in the state;

26 (4) recommending improvements for the coordination of the harvesting,
27 processing, and marketing of wild Alaska salmon;

28 (5) encouraging the development of new product forms for salmon;

29 (6) investigating the feasibility of regional and statewide cooperatives for
30 fishing, marketing, and transportation for Alaska wild salmon and salmon products;

31 (7) recommending improvements to the marketing efforts of the Alaska

1 salmon industry and ensuring the distinction of Alaska salmon products from farmed salmon;

2 (8) encouraging Alaska salmon hatcheries to tailor their programs to market
3 dynamics and to provide the maximum possible percentage of their production to common
4 property fisheries;

5 (9) contracting and cooperating with appropriate private and public agencies
6 in order to provide sound economic, social, and environmental data to the decision-making
7 process;

8 (10) contracting for research, consultants, and staff, as the task force considers
9 necessary;

10 (11) recommending ways to ensure that the benefit provided to the state as a
11 result of research efforts is commensurate with the funding for that research; and

12 (12) exploring the potential of regional solutions and not just statewide results;
13 and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be composed of 13 members,
15 appointed jointly by the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives as
16 follows:

17 (1) one member from the senate;

18 (2) one member from the house of representatives;

19 (3) one small salmon seafood processor;

20 (4) one large salmon seafood processor;

21 (5) one sport fisher;

22 (6) six commercial fishers, one from each of the following regions of Alaska:
23 Bristol Bay; Southwest Alaska; Kodiak; Cook Inlet; Prince William Sound; Southeast Alaska;

24 (7) one hatchery operator; and

25 (8) one public member who is a resident; and be it

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force members are not eligible for
27 compensation but are entitled to per diem and travel expenses; and be it

28 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall submit a report of its findings and
29 proposed industry and legislative changes to the legislature by January 31, 2003, and may
30 make any interim reports it considers advisable; and be it

31 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force is terminated at 11:59 p.m. on March 1,

1 2003.

2 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
3 Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
4 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.