

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(RES)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/22/05

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to open ocean aquaculture in the federal exclusive economic zone.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** Alaska wild fish stocks are healthy and sustainable, in large part due to a
4 strong gene pool and Alaska's history of sound fisheries management, clean water, and habitat
5 protection; and

6 **WHEREAS** Alaska commercial, subsistence, and recreational fisheries are managed
7 to achieve the state's constitutional mandate of sustained yield; and

8 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska enacted legislation in 1990 to prohibit finfish farming
9 in state waters; and

10 **WHEREAS** there are numerous outstanding issues and concerns regarding the social,
11 economic, health, and environmental consequences of farmed fish, both in state and federal
12 waters; and

13 **WHEREAS** open net cage fish farming poses persistent risks to the health of the
14 marine resources of Alaska; and

15 **WHEREAS** there are patents pending to cultivate and introduce genetically modified
16 fish into open waters which will pose a direct threat to wild stock fisheries; and

1 **WHEREAS** salmon farming has had severe economic impacts on coastal
2 communities in Alaska as demonstrated by significantly lower prices for wild salmon
3 fisheries products; and

4 **WHEREAS** Alaska coastal communities and fishing families rely on the health of
5 wild fish stocks for a strong economy; and

6 **WHEREAS** global markets increasingly demand natural seafood products harvested
7 sustainably from a clean environment; and

8 **WHEREAS** the seafood industry in Alaska has developed strong name recognition in
9 the marketplace for wild, natural, and healthy seafood products; and

10 **WHEREAS** successful seafood marketing depends on product differentiation and
11 Alaska's untarnished name is its greatest asset in the global market; and

12 **WHEREAS** the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is promoting
13 legislation to permit open ocean aquaculture in federal waters from three to 200 miles
14 offshore of the states; and

15 **WHEREAS** the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
16 provides for input from fishermen and coastal communities through regional fishery
17 management councils; and

18 **WHEREAS** the proponents of federal open ocean aquaculture and members of the
19 ocean aquaculture industry have not satisfactorily demonstrated that this activity will not be
20 detrimental to the ocean resources and to the economy of Alaska coastal communities; and

21 **WHEREAS** Governor Frank H. Murkowski has proposed a five-year moratorium on
22 all permitting, leasing, or development of ocean pen-reared shellfish and finfish in the federal
23 exclusive economic zone off Alaska;

24 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature is committed to ensuring that
25 open ocean aquaculture does no harm to ecosystem integrity, to existing wild fisheries, or to
26 the social and economic well-being of Alaska coastal communities; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature opposes open ocean
28 aquaculture for finfish and predatory shellfish; and be it

29 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges
30 Congress to prohibit the issuance of any license to permit an aquaculture facility that imports,
31 exports, possesses, cultivates, sells or otherwise handles genetically modified fish in the

1 federal exclusive economic zone or has access to open waters; and be it

2 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the regional
3 fishery management councils under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and
4 Management Act and respectfully requests that the councils be granted authority over any
5 proposals regarding open ocean aquaculture in federal waters; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
7 United States Congress to require any federal proposal to authorize open ocean aquaculture in
8 the federal exclusive economic zone to undergo a legislative environmental impact statement,
9 as required by the National Environmental Policy Act.

10 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
11 of the United States; the Honorable Ted Stevens, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate
12 and member of the Alaska delegation in Congress; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker
13 of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, United States Secretary
14 of Commerce; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator, and the Honorable Don
15 Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.