

**CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39(STA)**  
**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**  
**TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

**BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**Offered: 3/27/08**

**Referred: Rules**

**Sponsor(s): HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Senate to ratify the Law of the Sea Treaty.**

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

3 **WHEREAS**, in August 2007, Russia sent two small submarines into the Arctic Ocean  
4 to plant that nation's flag under the North Pole to support its territorial claim that its  
5 continental shelf extends to the North Pole; and

6 **WHEREAS** Denmark is exploring whether a mountain range under the Arctic Ocean  
7 is connected to Greenland, a territory of Denmark; and

8 **WHEREAS** Canada is considering the establishment of military bases to protect its  
9 claim to the Northwest Passage; and

10 **WHEREAS** the actions taken by Russia, Denmark, and Canada have been exercised  
11 under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea; and

12 **WHEREAS** the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea permits member  
13 nations to claim an exclusive economic zone out to 200 nautical miles from shore, with an  
14 exclusive sovereign right to explore, manage, and develop all living and nonliving resources,  
15 including deep sea mining, within that exclusive economic zone; and

16 **WHEREAS** the United States Arctic Research Commission estimates that the United

1 Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea would permit the United States to lay claim  
2 beyond the present 200-mile exclusive economic zone to an area of the northern seabed off  
3 Alaska that is equal in size to California; and

4 **WHEREAS** 155 nations have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of  
5 the Sea, including all allies of the United States and the world's maritime powers; and

6 **WHEREAS** ratification of the current form of the United Nations Convention on the  
7 Law of the Sea has been pending before the United States Senate since 1994, and hearings on  
8 the treaty were held by the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in 1994,  
9 2003, and 2004, and on September 27, 2007, and October 4, 2007; and

10 **WHEREAS**, despite favorable reports by the United States Senate Committee on  
11 Foreign Relations regarding the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in 2004  
12 and 2007, the United States Senate has yet to vote on the ratification of the Convention; and

13 **WHEREAS** the United States, with 1,000 miles of Arctic coast off of the State of  
14 Alaska, remains the only Arctic nation that has not ratified the United Nations Convention on  
15 the Law of the Sea; and

16 **WHEREAS**, until the United States Senate votes to ratify the United Nations  
17 Convention on the Law of the Sea, the United States may not have the authority to promote its  
18 claims to an extended area of the continental shelf, refute the claim of authority by other  
19 nations to exercise greater control over the Arctic, or take a permanent seat on the  
20 International Seabed Authority Council; and

21 **WHEREAS**, until the United States ratifies the United Nations Convention on the  
22 Law of the Sea, the United States cannot participate in deliberations to amend provisions of  
23 the Convention that relate to the

24 (1) oil, gas, and mineral resources in the Arctic Ocean and other northern  
25 waters;

26 (2) conduct of essential scientific research in the world's oceans;

27 (3) right of the United States to the use of the seas;

28 (4) rules of navigation;

29 (5) effect of the use of the seas on world economic development; and

30 (6) environmental concerns related to the use of the seas; and

31 **WHEREAS** the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea will have an

1 important and beneficial effect on virtually all states, both coastal and noncoastal, because the  
2 United States is heavily dependent on the use, development, and conservation of the world's  
3 oceans and their resources; and

4 **WHEREAS** the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea will not interfere  
5 with the intelligence-gathering efforts of the United States or the navigational freedom of the  
6 United States Navy; and

7 **WHEREAS** ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea has  
8 wide bipartisan support, including support for the ratification by Senator Joseph R. Biden,  
9 Chair of the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Senator Richard G. Lugar,  
10 ranking Republican on the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and the  
11 President of the United States;

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Senate  
13 to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

14 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-  
15 President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Joseph R.  
16 Biden, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable Richard G.  
17 Lugar, ranking Republican on the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the  
18 Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, members of the  
19 Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the United States Senate.