

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 22**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/24/10

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs, Finance

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Establishing and relating to the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** Alaska is the only Arctic state in the nation; and

4 **WHEREAS** recent warming trends have resulted in the depletion of Arctic perennial  
5 sea ice by nine percent a decade; and

6 **WHEREAS**, according to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the  
7 rate of depletion is accelerating because of interaction among the ice, oceans, and atmosphere;  
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** rapidly retreating sea ice is altering fish and wildlife habitats and  
10 affecting the accessibility and viability of certain species, on which many local communities  
11 rely for nutritional and cultural purposes; and

12 **WHEREAS** reduced sea ice is affecting polar route navigation by opening oceans  
13 previously frozen year-round; and

14 **WHEREAS** the new accessibility of the Northern waters is resulting in increased  
15 marine transportation, access to resources, tourism, fisheries, and the presence of United  
16 States government agencies in the North; and

1           **WHEREAS** the waters of Northern Alaska are of national security and strategic  
2 importance to the United States and the State of Alaska; and

3           **WHEREAS**, because of national security concerns, the United States Coast Guard is  
4 increasing its presence in the North and has plans to build new infrastructure to support its  
5 heightened activity, including housing and office facilities and possibly a deep water port; and

6           **WHEREAS** Northern Alaska contains important mineral and other resources both in  
7 state waters and on the outer continental shelf; and

8           **WHEREAS** commercial activities, including resource development, and the revenue  
9 they generate for the state may be significantly affected by the changing Arctic waters; and

10          **WHEREAS** those changes will affect local communities, businesses, the state, and  
11 the natural resources on which they rely; and

12          **WHEREAS** there is no comprehensive state plan for Alaska's Northern waters; and

13          **WHEREAS** various federal agencies and international bodies are working together to  
14 form a commission to address the changing ocean patterns and the opportunities and problems  
15 that may arise as a result of those changing patterns; and

16          **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska should be involved in the process of forming the  
17 commission; and

18          **WHEREAS** a comprehensive plan to address the warming ocean, including the  
19 economic, ecological, and security effects, will benefit the state and its residents;

20          **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Alaska Northern Waters  
21 Task Force is created in the legislative branch; and be it

22          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall consist of nine members as follows:

23                 (1) one senator from Northwest Alaska appointed by the President of the  
24 Senate;

25                 (2) two representatives from Northwest Alaska appointed by the Speaker of  
26 the House of Representatives; and

27                 (3) six members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the  
28 Speaker of the House of Representatives, as follows:

29                         (A) one member representing the United States Coast Guard;

30                         (B) one member representing the executive branch of state  
31 government;

1 (C) the mayors of the North Slope Borough, Northwest Arctic  
2 Borough, and City of Nome; and

3 (D) one member representing the United States Department of the  
4 Interior; and be it

5 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall select a chair from among the  
6 members of the legislature; and be it

7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the municipal government and federal government  
8 members of the task force may receive per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards  
9 and commissions under AS 39.20.180 if they do not receive reimbursement for expenses from  
10 the municipal or federal government; and be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force may meet during and between legislative  
12 sessions; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Bush Caucus chair may assign staff to provide  
14 support services for the task force; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force include the following:

16 (1) assess and facilitate creation of a state and federal commission responsible  
17 for overseeing the development of state and federal northern ocean waters;

18 (2) facilitate regional coordination, cooperation, and outreach regarding the  
19 creation of the commission to keep local stakeholders informed and to incorporate their input  
20 into the process; and

21 (3) identify and coordinate efforts of mutual concern for federal, state, and  
22 local agencies, as well as international interests in the creation of the commission; and be it

23 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall conduct hearings in the Northern  
24 region of the state to fulfill its purpose; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall provide recommendations  
26 regarding the formation of the commission and shall deliver a preliminary report of its  
27 findings to the legislature by January 20, 2012, and deliver a final report to the legislature on  
28 January 30, 2012, together with legislative proposals for consideration; and be it

29 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be available for legislative hearings  
30 regarding its final report and recommendations; and be it

31 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the continuation or termination of the task force shall

1 be reevaluated during the Second Regular Session of the Twenty-Seventh Alaska State  
2 Legislature.