

**CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 23(FIN)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Offered: 3/16/12**

**Referred: Rules**

**Sponsor(s): HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE ALASKA NORTHERN WATERS  
TASK FORCE**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Establishing and relating to the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Arctic is warming at twice the global rate, resulting in the loss of  
4 perennial sea ice and changes to the terrestrial environment; and

5 **WHEREAS** scientists recently predicted that, in 30 to 40 years, there will no longer  
6 be summer sea ice in the Arctic; and

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

9 **WHEREAS** the loss of sea ice will bring new opportunities for mineral extraction, oil  
10 and gas development, fisheries, tourism, and marine shipping; and

11 **WHEREAS** the Arctic might contain one-quarter of the world's untapped petroleum  
12 reserves; and

13 **WHEREAS** Norway, Canada, Russia, and Denmark are making or preparing to make  
14 claims to the Arctic seafloor under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and  
15 are increasing their scientific research on and offshore exploration for minerals and oil and  
16 gas; and

1           **WHEREAS** Canada and Russia are increasing their military presence in the Arctic  
2 and are planning to build infrastructure to support that increased military presence; and

3           **WHEREAS** both Arctic and non-Arctic countries are increasing their presence in the  
4 Arctic and are building or planning to build additional infrastructure, including ports, safe  
5 harbors, search and rescue centers, and icebreakers and other Arctic-capable vessels; and

6           **WHEREAS** the waters of Northern Alaska are of national security and strategic  
7 importance to the United States and the state; and

8           **WHEREAS**, because of national security concerns, the United States Coast Guard is  
9 increasing its presence in the North and has plans to build new infrastructure to support its  
10 heightened activity, including housing and office facilities and possibly including a deepwater  
11 port; and

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

14           **WHEREAS** local communities, businesses, the state, and the natural resources that  
15 local communities, businesses, and the state rely on will be affected by commercial activities  
16 and resource development in the Arctic; and

17           **WHEREAS** climate changes in the Arctic affect the habitat, accessibility, and  
18 viability of fish and wildlife species that local communities rely on for nutritional and cultural  
19 purposes; and

20           **WHEREAS** Norway, Canada, Russia, Denmark, and other countries have formal  
21 Arctic policies on or strategies for future development in the Arctic; and

22           **WHEREAS** the Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut have developed a shared  
23 northern vision to guide development in the Canadian Arctic; and

24           **WHEREAS** this state is the only Arctic state in the United States; and

25           **WHEREAS** the state does not have a comprehensive plan for the northern waters of  
26 Alaska; and

27           **WHEREAS** the state does not have a comprehensive Arctic policy; and

28           **WHEREAS** a comprehensive policy to address the Arctic areas of the state, including  
29 the economic, ecological, and security effects, will benefit the state and its residents; and

30           **WHEREAS** it is the policy of the United States government to involve the indigenous  
31 communities of the Arctic in decisions that affect those communities;

1           **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Alaska Arctic Policy  
 2 Commission is created in the legislative branch and shall consist of 17 members and four  
 3 alternate members as follows:

4                   (1) three senators appointed by the President of the Senate, one member being  
 5 from the minority;

6                   (2) three representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
 7 Representatives, one member being from the minority; and

8                   (3) 10 members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate and the  
 9 Speaker of the House of Representatives as follows, of which the members appointed under  
 10 (B) - (J) of this paragraph shall be residents of the state:

11                           (A) one member representing the federal government;

12                           (B) one member representing a tribal entity;

13                           (C) one member representing the mining industry;

14                           (D) one member representing the oil and gas industry;

15                           (E) one member representing an accredited university or college in  
 16 Alaska, who has a background in Arctic science;

17                           (F) one member representing fisheries;

18                           (G) one member from a local government or an association of a local  
 19 government;

20                           (H) one member from a coastal community;

21                           (I) one member representing an international Arctic organization;

22                           (J) one member of a conservation group;

23                   (4) one member representing the executive branch of state government,  
 24 appointed by the Governor;

25                   (5) four alternate members appointed jointly by the President of the Senate  
 26 and the Speaker of the House of Representatives; each alternate member shall be a resident of  
 27 the state and meet at least one of the qualifications of a regular member appointed jointly by  
 28 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and be it

29           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that a vacancy on the commission shall be filled in the  
 30 manner of the original appointment; and be it

31           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the representatives on the commission shall select one

1 cochair from the representative members, and the senators on the commission shall select one  
2 cochair from the senator members; and the cochairs may assign staff to provide support to the  
3 commission; and be it

4 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the public members and, if the member representing  
5 the federal government does not receive reimbursement for expenses from the federal  
6 government, the federal government member of the commission may receive per diem and  
7 travel expenses authorized for boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180; and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the commission may meet during and between  
9 legislative sessions, and the duties of the commission include the following:

10 (1) conduct hearings and take public testimony throughout the state to fulfill  
11 the purpose of the commission;

12 (2) develop an Arctic policy for the state and produce a strategy for the  
13 implementation of an Arctic policy; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the commission shall provide recommendations  
15 regarding Arctic policy and shall deliver a preliminary report of its findings to the legislature  
16 by January 30, 2014, and deliver a final report to the legislature on January 30, 2015, together  
17 with legislative proposals for consideration; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the commission shall be available for legislative  
19 hearings regarding its final report and recommendations; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the continuation or termination of the commission  
21 shall be reevaluated during the First Regular Session of the Twenty-Ninth Alaska State  
22 Legislature.