

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES THOMAS, Kawasaki, Austerman, Pruitt, Miller, Johnson, Seaton, Neuman, Millett, Hawker, Peggy Wilson, Chenault, Gara, Thompson, Gardner

Introduced: 3/10/11

Referred: Rules

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to amend the groundfish**
2 **fisheries management plan for the Gulf of Alaska to allow for an annually adjusted cap**
3 **of prohibited species catch based on an abundance of bycatch species, and expeditiously**
4 **to implement a Chinook bycatch cap to limit the number of Chinook salmon harvested**
5 **as bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska.**

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:**

7 **WHEREAS** the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council is the federal regulatory
8 body with oversight of fisheries in federal waters; and

9 **WHEREAS** the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council currently sets a fixed
10 cap of 2,000 metric tons of halibut bycatch for a trawl fishery and 300 metric tons for a
11 longline fishery, regardless of bycatch species abundance; and

12 **WHEREAS** the current groundfish fishery management plan for the Gulf of Alaska
13 does not limit the number of Chinook salmon that can be taken as bycatch; and

14 **WHEREAS** the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council has not revised the
15 groundfish fisheries management prohibited species catch plan for nearly two decades; and

1 **WHEREAS** Gulf of Alaska halibut populations have been steadily decreasing over
2 the past decade; and

3 **WHEREAS** the total allowable catch for commercial and sport halibut fishermen has
4 been adjusted to correspond with the decrease in halibut populations; and

5 **WHEREAS** the percentage of prohibited species caught has dramatically increased
6 relative to the total allowable catch for targeted halibut sport and commercial fisheries; and

7 **WHEREAS** the 2007 and 2010 Chinook salmon incidental catch rate in the Gulf of
8 Alaska reached historical highs of 40,320 and 51,258, respectively;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives urges the North Pacific
10 Fisheries Management Council expeditiously to amend the Gulf of Alaska groundfish
11 fisheries management plans to allow for prohibited species catch limits based on the
12 abundance of those species; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives urges the North Pacific
14 Fisheries Management Council expeditiously to implement a Chinook bycatch cap to limit the
15 number of Chinook salmon harvested as bycatch in the Gulf of Alaska; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives requests the Governor to
17 encourage his appointees to the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council to ensure that
18 these matters are addressed by the council with the utmost expeditiousness.

19 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
20 the United States; the Honorable Gary F. Locke, United States Secretary of Commerce; the
21 Honorable Cora Campbell, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game; James W. Balsiger,
22 Regional Administrator, Alaska Region, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
23 Fisheries Service; Eric Olsen, Chairman, North Pacific Fisheries Management Council; and
24 the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the
25 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.