

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 301**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - THIRD SPECIAL SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES GATTIS, Saddler, Hughes, Colver, Tilton

Introduced: 11/2/15

Referred: Resources

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Opposing the recent decisions to cancel future lease sales in the Chukchi and Beaufort**  
2 **Seas and to deny the suspension of Shell and Statoil's leases; urging the United States**  
3 **Department of the Interior to continue to promote oil exploration in the Chukchi and**  
4 **Beaufort Seas; urging the United States Bureau of Safety and Environmental**  
5 **Enforcement to reconsider and approve requests from Shell and Statoil for lease**  
6 **suspensions in the Chukchi Sea Planning Area and Beaufort Sea Planning Area; and**  
7 **urging the ongoing efforts to develop offshore oil and gas in the Arctic Outer**  
8 **Continental Shelf.**

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

10 **WHEREAS** the state contains a world-class hydrocarbon basin holding over 30  
11 percent of the nation's technically recoverable oil and gas resources; and

12 **WHEREAS** Arctic Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas development would supply  
13 natural gas to the Alaska liquefied natural gas project, ensuring the long-term success of the  
14 project; and

1           **WHEREAS** the United States Bureau of Ocean Energy Management estimates the  
2 existence of 4,300,000,000 barrels of oil in the Chukchi Sea; and

3           **WHEREAS** the state has a rich history of developing its resources in a sustainable  
4 and responsible manner; and

5           **WHEREAS** the state can demonstrate its history of safely developing its fisheries,  
6 timber, and oil and gas resources; and

7           **WHEREAS** it is in the best interests of the state to continue the safe and responsible  
8 development of resources in the state; and

9           **WHEREAS**, before the sale, lease, or other disposition of state land, resources, or  
10 property, the state, through the division of oil and gas, issues a best interest finding that  
11 considers and discusses certain topics, including the reasonably foreseeable effects of the  
12 disposal on the area's fish and wildlife, historic and cultural resources, and communities, and  
13 incorporates mitigation measures that are designed to protect the landscape; and

14           **WHEREAS** the design and evolution of the best interest finding, in many cases,  
15 matches or, in some cases, exceeds federal standards imposed in federally controlled areas  
16 still available for oil and gas exploration and development; and

17           **WHEREAS** the state imposes standards to protect the landscape, including limiting  
18 the timing and intensity of travel on the tundra so that winter travel on temporary roads will  
19 do the least amount of damage; and

20           **WHEREAS** the state enforces strict requirements for oil discharge and contingency  
21 plans for all operators on the Alaska North Slope; and

22           **WHEREAS** the state has taken proactive measures, including deferring areas in the  
23 state's Beaufort Sea lease sale area where subsistence activity occurs, including areas  
24 immediately adjacent to Cross Island, where whaling crews from Nuiqsut have set up their  
25 whaling camp; and

26           **WHEREAS** the state will continue actively to address environmental standards,  
27 including modern mitigation standards that protect subsistence activities on the Alaska North  
28 Slope; and

29           **WHEREAS** the federal government has developed plans for leasing on a long-term  
30 basis, including plans for annual lease sales in the Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea Planning  
31 Areas in the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program; and

1           **WHEREAS** the United States Department of the Interior published a 2017-2022  
2 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, which proposes one lease sale each in  
3 the Chukchi Sea and Beaufort Sea planning areas; and

4           **WHEREAS** the federal government has limited immediate opportunities in several  
5 areas in the Arctic, including, most importantly, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, the  
6 National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska, and the Arctic Outer Continental Shelf; and

7           **WHEREAS**, on October 16, 2015, the United States Department of the Interior  
8 cancelled future Outer Continental Shelf oil and gas lease sales in the Chukchi Sea Planning  
9 Area and Beaufort Sea Planning Area, scheduled for 2016 and 2017, respectively; and

10          **WHEREAS**, on October 16, 2015, the United States Bureau of Safety and  
11 Environmental Enforcement denied requests from Shell and Statoil for lease suspensions in  
12 the Chukchi Sea Planning Area and Beaufort Sea Planning Area; and

13          **WHEREAS**, by actively managing its property, the state can induce the federal  
14 government to continue to pursue hydrocarbon resources in the Arctic; and

15          **WHEREAS** the state should form a strategic alliance with all affected local  
16 municipalities to identify the long-term needs of the state and local entities for rights-of-ways  
17 for critical infrastructure; and

18          **WHEREAS** the Department of the Interior needs guidance from the state on the  
19 number of lease sales and the timing of those lease sales;

20          **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature opposes the recent decisions of  
21 the Obama Administration to cancel future lease sales in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas and  
22 to deny the suspension of Shell and Statoil's leases; and be it

23          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States  
24 Department of the Interior to reconsider its actions and continue to promote oil and gas  
25 exploration in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas; and be it

26          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States  
27 Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement to reconsider and approve requests from  
28 Shell and Statoil for lease suspensions in the Chukchi Sea Planning Area and Beaufort Sea  
29 Planning Area; and be it

30          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Obama  
31 Administration to support ongoing efforts to develop offshore oil and gas in the Arctic Outer

1 Continental Shelf responsibly.

2 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of  
3 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and  
4 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of  
5 Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of  
6 Representatives; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the  
7 Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Loretta Lynch,  
8 Attorney General of the United States; the Honorable Sally Jewell, United States Secretary of  
9 the Interior; the Honorable Hilary Tompkins, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior; the  
10 Honorable Daniel M. Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Honorable  
11 John C. Cruden, Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources  
12 Division; Brian Salerno, Director of the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement;  
13 Richard L. Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO; James P. Hoffa, General President of the  
14 International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the  
15 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,  
16 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.