

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

February 5, 2015

10:08 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Bob Herron
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Charisse Millett
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Dan Ortiz

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7, Opposing the proposed designation of an Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

- MOVED CSHJR 7(FSH) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 7

SHORT TITLE: OPPOSE ALEUTIAN NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) EDGMON

01/21/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/15	(H)	FSH, RES
02/05/15	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM CAPITOL 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE BRYCE EDGMON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 7, as the sponsor of the resolution.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:08:39 AM](#)

CHAIR LOUISE STUTES called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. Representatives Stutes, Ortiz, Johnson, and Foster were present at the call to order. Representatives Kreiss-Tomkins, Millett, and Herron arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HJR 7-OPPOSE ALEUTIAN NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

[10:09:24 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7, Opposing the proposed designation of an Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary.

[10:09:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HJR 7, labeled 29-LS0368\H, Nauman, 1/27/15, as the working draft.

[10:10:03 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES objected for discussion.

[10:10:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BRYCE EDGMON, Alaska State Legislature, as the sponsor of the proposed resolution, directed attention to the Explanation of Changes Between HJR 7 and CSHJR 7(FSH) [included in members' packets] and explained the changes. He reported that both changes reflect the fact that, although the proposal for the Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary was rejected by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the proposal "was still clearly on the table in terms of a future submission of a request..." He first explained the changes on page 3, lines 3 - 7, which clarified that, although the nomination was deemed not sufficient, there had been an invitation for a revised nomination to be submitted. Directing attention to page 3, line 10, he explained that the phrase "or any similar nomination" was inserted to address this possibility of future nomination.

[10:12:33 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES removed her objection. There being no further objection, the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HJR 7,

labeled 29-LS0368\H, Nauman, 1/27/15, was adopted as the working draft.

[10:12:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON stated that this nomination for the marine sanctuary was an unwanted intrusion from an organization, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER), which had moved forward without any consultation even from members of the Alaska environmental community. He pointed out that PEER was unknown even to those members of the Alaska environmental community to whom he had spoken. He explained that the quest by PEER to establish a large marine sanctuary in the Aleutian Islands, effectively the size of the State of Alaska, had not been requested by any of the local communities in the area. He stated that "no one really knew about this" and he only found out about this nomination when it was in the process and became public. He emphasized that there was vigorous opposition by "essentially everyone that is aware of it in the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutian Island region." He pointed to the letters of opposition included in the members' packets. He declared that proposed HJR 7 would send a strong signal from the Alaska State Legislature that the body did not approve of this or similar actions as the communities had not been included in the discussion even though the process required that communities be participants. He offered his belief that it was not necessary to add to the existing process used by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, the Board of Fisheries, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game, the Aleutian Islands Risk Assessment panel, and the National Marine Fisheries Service in making determinations to this eco-system. He pointed out that the risk from off shore oil and gas exploration had been minimized by the recent presidential executive order withdrawing 32 million acres in this area from oil and gas leasing. He declared that many of these proposed measures for protection to a marine and seabird habitat were already in place. He emphasized that the proposed resolution was still in order, even though the initial PEER nomination had been rejected. He opined that the PEER nomination effort could be re-submitted in a revised application. He requested that the committee consider the proposed resolution in order to send a strong signal that it was necessary to include the consent and agreement from local communities for any programs affecting them.

[10:17:51 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony.

[10:18:27 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[10:19:17 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES closed public testimony after ascertaining no one wished to testify.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON declared his support for the proposed resolution. He referenced the PEER website, which stated that this nomination would be for the first national marine sanctuary in Alaska. He offered his belief that there would be additional nominations for other marine sanctuaries in the state. He stressed that it was important to send a message that the State of Alaska did not support this. He pointed out that some of these marine sanctuaries in California had "devastated sports fishing, for example..." He said that these marine sanctuaries can take an industry almost out of business, and this could be more devastating to the commercial fishing industry in Alaska. He stated that he wanted to "stop it, nip it in the bud." He avowed that the Aleutians would be the "first time we fight, it will not be the last" in order to protect the ability to use our natural resources. He affirmed his strong support for the proposed resolution.

[10:20:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT offered her belief that there was a large national movement to do just this through administrative order rather than go through the public process. She expressed her concern for the "lack of talking to Alaskans." "We are the biggest environmentalist that I know, Alaskans. We care about our environment because we work, recreate, we eat from our environment." She declared that this "flies in the face of how we manage our state and how we manage our federal lands and how we manage what's around us." She declared her support for the proposed resolution.

[10:22:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER asked about the process, should the PEER nomination for the Aleutian Islands National Marine Sanctuary be re-submitted.

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON opined that this nomination could be approved administratively through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

[10:23:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON concluded that the resolution underscores the strong management regime already in place in Alaska, and he lauded the work of the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, as well as the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish & Game. He pointed out that the proposed resolution had a zero fiscal note.

[10:24:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MILLETT moved to report CSHJR 7, Version 29-LS0368\H, Nauman, 1/27/15, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHJR 7(FSH) was moved from the House Special Committee on Fisheries.

[10:25:22 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 10:25 a.m.