

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE ARCTIC

March 20, 2018

8:29 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator Pete Kelly
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Click Bishop

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donald Olson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19 (AET)
Commending the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee; supporting the adoption of prevention measures into international agreements to ensure clear, universal, and enforceable marine safety measures in the Arctic; urging the state's delegation in the United States Congress and the governor to promote the adoption of spill prevention measures into international agreements; and urging the President of the United States and the United States Department of State to initiate negotiations to enter into international agreements to ensure safe and environmentally responsible marine operations in the Arctic.

- MOVED CSHJR 19 (AET) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 19

SHORT TITLE: ARCTIC MARINE SAFETY AGREEMENTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LINCOLN

04/07/17	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/07/17	(H)	AET
04/11/17	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
04/11/17	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
04/20/17	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
04/20/17	(H)	Heard & Held
04/20/17	(H)	MINUTE (AET)

04/25/17	(H)	AET AT 11:30 AM BARNES 124
04/25/17	(H)	Moved CSHJR 19(AET) Out of Committee
04/25/17	(H)	MINUTE(AET)
04/26/17	(H)	AET RPT CS(AET) NT 6DP
04/26/17	(H)	TECHNICAL TITLE CORRECTION
04/26/17	(H)	DP: TALERICO, JOSEPHSON, TUCK, NEUMAN, KNOPP, WESTLAKE
05/15/17	(H)	NOT TAKEN UP 5/15 - ON 5/16 CALENDAR
05/16/17	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
05/16/17	(H)	VERSION: CSHJR 19(AET)
05/17/17	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/17/17	(S)	ARC
02/14/18	(S)	RETURNED TO HOUSE PER REQUEST
02/14/18	(H)	BILL RECEIVED IN HOUSE
02/14/18	(H)	BILL REPRINTED ALL VERSIONS 2/14/18
02/14/18	(H)	RETURNED TO SENATE
03/20/18	(S)	ARC AT 8:30 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN LINCOLN
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 19.

WILLIE GOODWIN, Chair
Arctic Waterways Safety Committee
Kotzebue, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HJR 19.

ACTION NARRATIVE

8:29:10 AM

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic meeting to order at 8:29 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Hoffman, Bishop, Kelly, and Chair Giessel.

HJR 19-ARCTIC MARINE SAFETY AGREEMENTS

8:29:34 AM

CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of HJR 19.

8:29:50 AM

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN LINCOLN, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of HJR 19, said the resolution addresses a basic lack of safety

regulations in international waters off the coast of Alaska, a topic of great concern to his district. Part of the resolution commends the 2014 creation of the Arctic Waterways Safety Committee, a group composed of Arctic municipalities, marine mammal hunting groups, and Arctic marine shipping interests to promote safe and environmentally responsible shipping operations. The resolution encourages and promotes marine safety prevention measures for international traffic in the Bering Strait. It states that the Alaska Legislature supports the adoption of prevention measures into international agreements to ensure clear, universal, and enforceable safety measures in the Arctic.

[8:30:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LINCOLN said the Bering Strait is under federal jurisdiction beyond the three miles from shore and up to the end of the nation's exclusive economic zone. Beyond that is international and Russian waters. The resolution also encourages the governor and Congressional delegation to promote the adoption of spill prevention measures in international agreements. That is the best way to ensure that Alaska's coastlines and residents are protected by rules that apply to vessels of all nations. The resolution also calls for the president and U.S. Department of State to initiate negotiations with Alaska's coastal neighbors to enter into international agreements to ensure safe and environmentally responsible marine operations.

[8:31:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LINCOLN said the resolution mentions some international agreements that the U.S. has not chosen to participate in. Until the U.S. chooses to participate in those, the best means of addressing the lack of regulation is to work directly with Alaska's neighbors with bilateral agreements.

[8:32:08 AM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL said she appreciated that he presented data about transits through the Bering Strait. She and Senator Hoffman discussed that significant topic during the Arctic Policy Commission.

[8:32:42 AM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony.

[8:33:01 AM](#)

WILLIE GOODWIN, Chair, Arctic Waterways Safety Committee, supported HJR 19. He said they started working on safety issues

for mariners back in 2012. In 2010 the hunters from St. Lawrence Island noticed a lot of big Russian ships going north. The hunters became concerned and started discussions with the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard suggested they form this committee to develop safe practices for mariners. The committee has 15 members with hunter groups, industry, the people who haul freight and oil to Bering communities, and the tourism industry. They have been working on safe practices for waterways for everyone's safety who uses the waterways.

[8:35:11 AM](#)

MR. GOODWIN said they have a funding issue. If the legislature or someone could fund a communication infrastructure, that would take care of all the issues they have. When industry was in the Chukchi Sea, Shell had established a communication network with all the communities in the North Slope Borough, along with Kotzebue and St. Lawrence Island. There was a communication link to inform various communities of shipping traffic. After Shell pulled out, they have had no communication between communities and large ships going north. It is a big concern for the safety of hunters.

[8:37:20 AM](#)

MR. GOODWIN said the hunters need to know where ships are going and the speed in the water in front of these communities. They continue to work with various tribes on coastal Alaska, so hunters are informed of ships heading north and south. There are also tour ships from New York and Europe going to Siberia. That industry is going to increase. The safety of hunters is a concern.

[8:38:35 AM](#)

MR. GOODWIN said he was in support of HJR 19. It is important that the president and the Congressional delegation be on top of this. They have met with the Congressional delegation a couple of times to bring the issue up. Any help from the state of Alaska would be appreciated.

[8:39:16 AM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL closed public testimony.

[8:40:02 AM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL entertained a motion to move HJR 19.

SENATOR HOFFMAN moved HJR 19, Version 30-LS0680\D, from committee.

8:40:27 AM

There being no objection, CSHJR 19(AET) moved from the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic.

8:40:34 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic at 8:40.