

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 9

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES KREISS-TOMKINS, McCabe, Tuck, Stutes, Johnson, Drummond, Foster, Kaufman, Kurka, Schrage, Hannan, McCarty, Cronk, Josephson, Tilton, Rauscher, Story

Introduced: 5/18/21

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Encouraging the homeporting of new United States Coast Guard icebreakers in the**
2 **state.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the United States Coast Guard has proposed a renovation and expansion
5 of its Seattle waterfront base, which, over the next decade, will be home to three new
6 icebreakers and other vessels; and

7 **WHEREAS** the United States has a strategic interest in keeping pace with the
8 development and deployment of icebreaker fleets by Arctic nations such as Russia, Finland,
9 Sweden, China, and other nations that are currently outpacing the United States in the number
10 of icebreakers and sustained presence in the Arctic, which provide security for those nations'
11 research, military, fishing, and merchant fleets; and

12 **WHEREAS** the United States Coast Guard aims to support the United States in
13 conducting national missions, responding to critical events, and projecting American presence
14 in the high latitudes; and

15 **WHEREAS** the increased activity in the Arctic underscores a commensurate need for
16 proximate maritime presence in the Arctic region of the United States to enable the

1 responsible development of resources, foster maritime commerce, safeguard the well-being of
2 Arctic residents and ecosystems, facilitate emergency and disaster preparedness and response,
3 and protect the sovereignty of the United States; and

4 **WHEREAS** the state is at the forefront of Arctic knowledge, research, and
5 development and is uniquely positioned to provide, support, manage, and facilitate ease of
6 access to the high latitudes; and

7 **WHEREAS** the state's workforce has the experience and regional knowledge to
8 support the operations of the United States Coast Guard, the maintenance of Coast Guard
9 vessels, and the extraction of natural resources in the world's high latitudes, which include an
10 estimated 10 percent of the world's oil reserves and an abundance of fish stocks; and

11 **WHEREAS** the United States Coast Guard currently has limited Arctic emergency
12 response capabilities and no permanent bases near the strategically important Bering Strait or
13 the state's North Slope to support Coast Guard operations; and

14 **WHEREAS** the January 2012 delivery of fuel to Nome, Alaska, by the Russian fuel
15 tanker Renda, escorted by the United States Coast Guard's only polar icebreaker in service at
16 the time, Healy, emphasizes the need for icebreaker presence in Alaska; and

17 **WHEREAS** the United States Coast Guard should have a greater overall presence in
18 the Arctic, with the ability to stage assets closer to future shipping, oil and gas drilling,
19 commercial fishing activities, and military and other critical events; and

20 **WHEREAS** the state has an abundance of deepwater ports strategically located near
21 established fuel shortage infrastructure, availability of supply depots for the icebreakers, and
22 housing, jobs, schools, and shopping for members of the United States Coast Guard and their
23 families; and

24 **WHEREAS** homeporting icebreakers in the state would enhance the United States
25 Coast Guard's ability to meet its stated objectives;

26 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives encourages proposed new
27 United States Coast Guard icebreakers to be strategically homeported in the state rather than
28 in the Port of Seattle.