

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9(L&C)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/17/21

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS KIEHL, Begich, Wielechowski, Olson, Gray-Jackson, Wilson, Revak, Costello, Reinbold, Stevens, Bishop, Stedman, Holland, Hughes, von Imhof, Micciche

REPRESENTATIVES Spohnholz, Josephson, Story

A RESOLUTION

Urging the United States Congress to exempt cruise ships from certain provisions of the Passenger Vessel Services Act and other applicable provisions of federal law for the period during which Canadian ports are closed to cruise ships carrying more than 100 people; and urging the President of the United States not to fine or take actions against cruise ships sailing to the state.

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

WHEREAS more than 2,260,000 visitors traveled to the state in 2019; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, approximately 1,331,600 people visited the state by cruise ship, accounting for 90 percent of the visitors to Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, each year, the tourism industry generates more than \$214,000,000 in state and municipal revenue, more than \$1,400,000,000 in payroll, and \$2,200,000,000 of visitor spending; and

WHEREAS, on average, the tourism industry creates 8,394 jobs annually, generating \$271,600,000 in wages and earnings for Southeast Alaska each year; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the diminished tourism season resulting from the COVID-19

1 pandemic contributed to an increase in statewide unemployment from 6.2 percent to 11.0
 2 percent; in Southeast Alaska, unemployment increased from 4.7 percent to 11.3 percent,
 3 which equates to a loss of 17 percent of all jobs in the region; and

4 **WHEREAS** state residents are being vaccinated against COVID-19 at the highest rate
 5 per capita in the country, with 15 percent of state residents having been vaccinated; and

6 **WHEREAS**, on October 30, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 7 issued a Framework for Conditional Sailing Order, which allows cruise ships to resume
 8 sailing with mitigation plans for crews, passengers, and people in port communities and
 9 includes requirements for increased testing, additional crew safeguards, simulated voyages,
 10 and certification of mitigation plans; and

11 **WHEREAS**, on February 3, 2021, Canada extended until February 2022 a ban
 12 preventing cruise ships carrying more than 100 people from sailing through Canadian waters;
 13 and

14 **WHEREAS** 46 U.S.C. 55103 (Passenger Vessel Services Act) requires certain cruise
 15 ships to stop at a Canadian port in order to sail to the state; and

16 **WHEREAS** other federal laws may interfere with the ability of certain ships to hire
 17 and retain crews on routes to the state that do not include a stop in Canada; and

18 **WHEREAS** small business owners, families, and young people in the state depend on
 19 tourism jobs for their livelihoods, and a missed cruise season could cause irreparable
 20 economic harm;

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
 22 Congress to exempt certain cruise ships sailing to the state from provisions of the Passenger
 23 Vessel Services Act and other federal laws that require cruise ships to stop at a Canadian or
 24 other foreign port in order to operate in the state for the period during which Canadian ports
 25 are closed to cruise ships carrying more than 100 people; and be it

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, if the United States Congress does not exempt cruise
 27 ships from the requirements of the Passenger Vessel Services Act, the Alaska State
 28 Legislature urges the President of the United States not to fine or take other enforcement
 29 actions under the Passenger Vessel Services Act against cruise ships sailing to the state for the
 30 period during which Canadian ports are closed to the cruise ships.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President

1 of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and
2 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan,
3 U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
4 delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 117th United States Congress.