

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE**

**Introduced: 2/23/26**

**Referred: House Special Committee on Fisheries, Resources**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Congress and federal fisheries managers to make changes to**  
2 **the federal Prohibited Species Donation program to reduce the waste of edible bycatch,**  
3 **increase vessel participation, and improve food security in the state.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** the federal Prohibited Species Donation program, also known as the  
6 Bycatch to Food Banks program, was established in the 1990s to address the wasteful discard  
7 of edible bycatch, including salmon and halibut, caught incidentally in the federal Bering Sea  
8 and Gulf of Alaska groundfish trawl fisheries; and

9 **WHEREAS** the program, pioneered by SeaShare, an organization founded to help the  
10 seafood industry donate to hunger relief efforts, in collaboration with the National Marine  
11 Fisheries Service and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, has successfully  
12 reclaimed millions of pounds of high-quality protein for distribution to food banks and hunger  
13 relief organizations, reducing environmental waste and aiding vulnerable communities; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 1993 - 1995, the National Marine Fisheries Service began issuing  
15 Experimental Fishing Permits, which led to formal implementation of the Prohibited Species

1 Donation program in 1996 through Amendments 26 and 29 to the fishery management plans  
2 for the fisheries of the United States' exclusive economic zone off Alaska and expanded to  
3 include voluntary donations of marketable seafood products; and

4 **WHEREAS** the program remains in effect but has become increasingly difficult for  
5 vessels to use in practice because of economic and operational constraints; and

6 **WHEREAS** recent regulatory changes, compliance concerns, and other factors have  
7 led to declines in vessel participation and bycatch donations, resulting in the waste of valuable  
8 fisheries resources amid ongoing food security challenges; and

9 **WHEREAS** the program was originally intended to prevent the waste of edible fish  
10 by allowing certain vessels to retain fish that the vessels would otherwise be required to  
11 discard at sea; and

12 **WHEREAS**, to avoid creating incentives that might increase bycatch, the current  
13 program provides that vessels may not receive financial compensation, quota credit, or  
14 regulatory offsets for their participation; and

15 **WHEREAS** participation in the program is not without cost for participating vessels,  
16 as retaining bycatch imposes significant processing, transportation, and vessel-operation  
17 costs; and

18 **WHEREAS** many vessels are discarding prohibited species at sea, rather than  
19 retaining them for donation as permitted by law, because changing economic conditions and  
20 increased compliance costs make participation in the program impractical, even when vessel  
21 owners support the program's humanitarian goals; and

22 **WHEREAS** discarding edible bycatch at sea, when those fishery resources could be  
23 used to improve food security for state residents, is inconsistent with the conservation and  
24 food-security purposes of the program; and

25 **WHEREAS** the program can be amended to better align the program with ethical  
26 fishing practices to support the state's seafood industry and enhance food security without  
27 incentivizing higher bycatch rates;

28 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States  
29 Congress, federal fisheries managers, and the state's congressional delegation, the Honorable  
30 Lisa Murkowski, the Honorable Dan Sullivan, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, to  
31 consider legislative, regulatory, and administrative actions to ensure the Prohibited Species

1 Donation program more effectively reduces the wasteful discard of edible bycatch and  
2 addresses state food security, while preserving the program's voluntary participation, strict  
3 monitoring requirements, and prohibitions on sale or quota credits; and be it

4 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in adopting any legislative, regulatory, or  
5 administrative change to the Prohibited Species Donation program to reduce the waste of  
6 edible bycatch, Congress or the relevant federal agency should avoid incentivizing increased  
7 bycatch or creating a secondary market for prohibited species and instead make targeted  
8 adjustments that increase voluntary participation without altering bycatch limits or  
9 conservation objectives.

10 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ted Cruz, Chair of the U.S.  
11 Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; the Honorable Bruce  
12 Westerman, Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources; the Honorable  
13 Howard Lutnick, United States Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Dr. Neil Jacobs,  
14 Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and  
15 Atmospheric Administration Administrator; Angel Drobica, Chair of the North Pacific  
16 Fishery Management Council; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan  
17 Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S. Representative, members of  
18 the Alaska delegation in Congress.