

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR BJORKMAN

Introduced: 4/14/25

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting federal, state, and local efforts to clean up and remove marine debris from**
2 **the state; urging the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the**
3 **Environmental Protection Agency to provide additional funding for those efforts and to**
4 **remove barriers faced by tribes and rural communities in accessing those funds; and**
5 **urging the Alaska Congressional delegation to advocate for increased federal funding**
6 **and support for marine debris prevention, clean up, removal, backhaul, and education.**

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

8 **WHEREAS** Alaskans depend on a clean and healthy ocean and shoreline for
9 sustainable economies, communities, and ways of life; and

10 **WHEREAS** the state has more than 30,000 miles of shoreline and an estimated tidal
11 shoreline of almost 50,000 miles, which is more than the rest of the United States combined;
12 and

13 **WHEREAS** the state's shoreline faces the North Pacific Ocean, the Gulf of Alaska,
14 and the Bering, Beaufort, and Chukchi seas; and

1 **WHEREAS** marine debris causes many adverse effects, including entanglement of
2 and ingestion by birds, fish, and other animals, exposure to toxic chemicals, habitat
3 destruction, and interference with vessel transit and operations; and

4 **WHEREAS** these adverse effects can interfere with subsistence, commercial, and
5 recreational fishing, tourism, recreation, and other important aspects of life in the state, even
6 though the affected communities and residents of the state largely did not cause the problem;
7 and

8 **WHEREAS** the marine debris problem is particularly acute in the state because of the
9 state's rugged shoreline, ocean currents that concentrate debris in remote locations, and ocean-
10 dependent coastal communities; and

11 **WHEREAS** coastal communities in the state lack the needed resources to transport
12 debris for recycling or disposal even after the debris is removed from beaches; and

13 **WHEREAS** the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has, since 2006,
14 worked with partners to conduct debris research, removal, and prevention and has directly
15 funded projects in the state that have removed nearly 2,000,000 pounds of debris; and

16 **WHEREAS**, as of 2014, individual tribes, communities, organizations like Ocean
17 Conservancy, and other partners around the state have removed more than 3,000,000 pounds
18 of debris in documented cleanups; and

19 **WHEREAS** the health of the state's fisheries, ocean, and shoreline is foundational to
20 the state's economy;

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports federal, state, and local
22 efforts to prevent marine debris from reaching the state's shorelines and to promote the clean
23 up and removal of marine debris from the state's shorelines; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the National
25 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, and other
26 federal agencies to dedicate additional funding, and to remove barriers faced by tribes and
27 rural communities in accessing those funds, to support efforts to clean up and remove marine
28 debris from the state; and be it

29 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the work of the
30 Alaska Congressional delegation to advocate for increased federal funding and support for
31 marine debris prevention, clean up, removal, backhaul, and education; and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the state to work
2 with coastal communities, tribes, nonprofit organizations, municipal departments, and the
3 private sector to the greatest extent possible to address the challenges of marine debris as it
4 affects the state's shorelines.

5 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
6 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S.
7 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.