

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES**

January 29, 2026  
9:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon, Vice Chair  
Representative Chuck Kopp  
Representative Kevin McCabe  
Representative Sarah Vance

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Rebecca Himschoot  
Representative Bill Elam

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29  
Supporting the extension of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 14024; supporting the continued national prohibition on Russian seafood imports effected by Executive Orders 14024, 14066, and 14068; and urging the President of the United States, federal agencies, and the United States Congress to maintain and strengthen federal measures that ensure fair trade, protect the state's seafood industry, and promote sustainable and ethical seafood production.

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 29

SHORT TITLE: BAN ON RUSSIAN SEAFOOD

SPONSOR(s): FISHERIES

01/23/26	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/23/26	(H)	FSH
01/27/26	(H)	FSH AT 10:00 AM GRUENBERG 120
01/27/26	(H)	-- Meeting Postponed to 9:00 am 1/29/26
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01/29/26	(H)	FSH AT 9:00 AM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

MATT GRUENING, Staff  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Explained the proposed Committee Substitute for HJR 29 on behalf of the sponsor, House Special Committee on Fisheries, which Representative Stutes serves as Chair.

JULIE DECKER, President  
Pacific Seafood Processors Association  
Seattle, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HJR 29.

JEREMY WOODROW, Executive Director  
Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of HJR 29 and discussed current seafood market conditions.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[9:01:41 AM](#)

**CHAIR LOUISE STUTES** called the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Representatives Edgmon, Kopp, McCabe, Vance, and Stutes were present at the call to order.

#### **HJR 29-BAN ON RUSSIAN SEAFOOD**

[9:03:01 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29, Supporting the extension of the national emergency declared in Executive Order 14024; supporting the continued national prohibition on Russian seafood imports effected by Executive Orders 14024, 14066, and 14068; and urging the President of the United States, federal agencies, and the United States Congress to maintain and strengthen federal measures that ensure fair trade, protect the state's seafood industry, and promote sustainable and ethical seafood production.

[9:03:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HJR 29, Version 34-LS1314\N, Bullard, 1/28/26, as a working document. There being no objection, Version N was before the committee.

9:04:08 AM

MATT GRUENING, Staff, Representative Louise Stutes, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the bill sponsor, the House Special Committee on Fisheries. He said that the changes associated with Version N came from the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and people associated with the fishing industry.

MR. GRUENING said that Alaska's seafood industry is facing a serious threat from Russia's seafood industry. He said that Russia has unfair trade and market practices that include dumping unsustainably managed seafood into international and domestic markets. This has created strain on Alaska fishermen. He said that Federal Executive Order (EO) 14024 was originally implemented in 2021 and was expanded by EOs 14068 and 14114. He said that EO 14068 amended the original EO 14024 to include seafood. He said that EO 14114 further closed the loophole that allowed for Russian seafood imports into the U.S. when using an intermediary country.

MR. GRUENING said that EO 14024 was extended on April 10, 2025, and is set to expire on April 15, 2026. The resolution calls on President Donald Trump, federal agencies, and U.S. Congress to extend the executive orders and enhance enforcement to ensure fair trade practices for the Alaska seafood industry while promoting sustainable and ethical seafood. He said that this would require additional funding since only a small percentage of containers are checked while in the process of importing seafood. He said the resolution looks to Congress to assist with putting these measures in place.

9:06:22 AM

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE remarked that Russians are selling pollock to European markets using the Alaska brand and whether this was something that the federal executive orders have been able to address. She was unsure whether addressing this problem should be included in the proposed resolution.

MR. GRUENING responded that anything that strengthens protections of Alaska seafood against Russian seafood imports, particularly rebranding, was appropriate for the proposed

resolution. He deferred to upcoming invited testifiers to help address these concerns.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE said that in addition to complications with Russian seafood, there were complications with Asian boats impacting Alaska's fisheries. She asked whether there had been any discussions regarding placing restrictions on Asian markets that have been detrimentally impacting the domestic seafood industry.

MR. GRUENING responded that he worked directly with ASMI on the specific wording of this resolution. He said that their specific request was to extend the existing ban, but he was sure the institute would be open to conversations regarding implementing additional language and legislation that would address other unfair trade practices. He noted that Mr. Woodrow could address this in upcoming invited testimony.

[9:08:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE commented that several reports from the summertime highlighted fishing fleets that caught fish in Alaska waters; loaded directly onto intermediary vessels headed for Asia; and never touched Alaska's shores. He asked whether the state was funding ASMI to label this type of seafood product under the Alaska brand. He reiterated that it never touches Alaska's shores and the state gets minimal money from it. He wondered how the state could justify spending money marketing the Alaska brand if it never benefits Alaska. He said the catch might even go to Russia and it is a "thorny" problem. He said that there was one boat parked the previous summer outside of Dillingham that allegedly took a considerable number of fish to Asia and not once did the boat cross into Alaska's waters. He said this is something that needs to be addressed eventually, especially if the state was spending money to "label" these fish without any benefit from them.

[9:10:38 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES said that she does not disagree with the sentiment and it was a topic that the committee could hear in future discussions. However, it is not pertinent to the current issue of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said it may not be pertinent for the hearing, unless those fish were going to Russia. He said once these types of boats leave, they cannot be tracked.

CHAIR STUTES said that ship destination is something that could be discussed in the future.

9:11:05 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP said that he is excited about the message that the proposed resolution sends. He said it is a timely message for Alaska's fishing industry. In 2022, fishermen were getting 47 to 50 cents a pound for sockeye salmon in Bristol Bay. Last summer, people got up to \$1.60 a pound for fish. He said that a significant part of this price increase was due to these emergency orders prohibiting the importation of Russian seafood. He said this supports the entire industry and makes a viable fishery.

9:12:29 AM

JULIE DECKER, President, Pacific Seafood Processors Association (PSPA), gave invited testimony in support of HJR 29. She said that it is a trade association which represents major seafood processors with 50 facilities in 22 coastal communities. This included places like Ketchikan, Cordova, Kodiak, Unalaska, and Bristol Bay. She said that PSPA affiliated companies buy fish from thousands of independent commercial fishermen across the state and in almost every fishery. She remarked that the health of the seafood industry, as the committee knew, is crucial to Alaska as it generates \$6 billion in economic activity in Alaska annually and provides 48,000 direct jobs. It is Alaska's largest manufacturing and export sector.

MS. DECKER said that PSPA strongly supports HJR 29, Version N, as it is one of the few levers that Alaska could pull to protect the state's seafood industry from unfair Russian trade practices. She said that maintaining these sanctions is essential for enabling fair competition for Alaska seafood in the US market. She said that more must be done to address the severe negative impacts of Russia's acts, policies, and practices which restrict U.S. commerce and greatly disadvantage the Alaska seafood industry in domestic and export markets across the globe.

MS. DECKER explained that in August 2014, Russia first prohibited imports of U.S. seafood as a countermeasure to U.S. sanctions against Russia after it invaded and annexed a part of Ukraine. Therefore, U.S. seafood has not had access to the Russian market and has not been qualified to export for almost

twelve years. Yet, through May 2024, imports of Russian seafood into U.S. markets have continued to climb. She firmly stated that this is the exact opposite of fair trade for the U.S. seafood industry.

MS. DECKER said that in 2023, the Alaska seafood industry faced historically challenging economic conditions. The estimated losses felt by Alaska in 2023 were approximately \$1.8 billion. She said that Russia was a key part of this economic downturn, as it is a direct competitor with Alaska seafood due to its proximity to Alaska. Both countries harvest wild salmon, wild crab, wild cod, and wild pollock, all of which constitute the majority of species harvested in Alaska. She said that Russia's fisheries are certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council and it sells its salmon as "Pacific salmon" and its pollock as "Alaskan Pollock." This has eroded the ability for consumers to differentiate these products from true Alaska seafood in the marketplace.

MS. DECKER explained that in 2024, a complete ban on all Russian seafood in the United States began in May. She noted that prior to the ban there were increased imports of Russian seafood into the U.S. via China. She said that Russian seafood product were on U.S. shelves until approximately January 1, 2025. Throughout 2025, the prohibition of Russian seafood has helped to stabilize the Alaska seafood industry.

MS. DECKER commented that since 2014, Russia, China, and North Korea have been investing in the strategic development of a seafood hub that consists of building new infrastructure for the harvest, movement, processing, and trade in the region where the three countries share a border. She referenced the City of Hunchun, a Chinese city on the Tumen River, where new seafood processing facilities, roads, railways, and ports have been built, all of which has made the movement of Russian harvested seafood into Chinese processing facilities and the shipment of finished goods very efficient. She said that reports indicate that North Koreans are used on the Chinese fishing vessels and in the processing facilities. She remarked that the level of strategic cooperation and investment in a region with questionable environmental and labor standards was concerning and leaves U.S. seafood companies noncompetitive. She said that in 2026, there are still many unknown risks related to trade and tariffs. However, if the prohibition of Russian seafood imports is extended, this will provide some continued stability in the domestic market. She said that the proposed resolution is in

alignment with the Federal Executive Order titled "Restoring American Seafood Competitiveness."

[9:17:59 AM](#)

JEREMY WOODROW, Executive Director, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, gave invited testimony in support of HJR 29 and discussed current seafood market conditions. He said that the resolution speaks for itself, and Ms. Decker spoke to the high points associated with the importance of the Russian seafood ban. He said that he would like to speak to some anecdotal information regarding what is happening in the marketplace currently. Things that cannot be put on paper since numerical summaries have not been finalized yet.

MR. WOODROW noted that as Ms. Decker had referred, when the initial Russian Seafood ban was instituted, there was a grace period. When the full ban was instituted in December 2022, the grace period extended to May 2024 for seafood companies in the U.S. to stockpile foreign caught seafood, mainly Russian seafood. This included seafood imports directly from Russia or through China as an intermediary. Based on estimates, that stockpile lasted around 12 to 18 months, well into 2025. He said that this was evident with what ASMI saw engaging with various partnerships and different seafood companies.

MR. WOODROW said that in late 2025, there has been a monumental shift in conversation. He noted that conversations with both retail and food service operators have changed and these companies are interested in purchasing 100 percent Alaska seafood and discovering how it can be promoted.

MR. WOODROW said that the packaging is changing as well. He said that as Ms. Decker alluded to, consumer differentiation between foreign and domestic caught seafood has been challenging. Previously, packages used labels that said, "Pacific salmon" or "wild cod," and this would apply to both Russian and Alaska seafood. Now the call-out is "Alaska salmon," "Alaska cod," or even "Alaska pollock" on the front of packaging. He said that moving forward, consumers in the U.S. can be confident that the fish is indeed coming from Alaska.

MR. WOODROW said that this allows ASMI to put both the fishermen's partner dollars and the dollars that this legislature and Governor Mike Dunleavy appropriated in this last legislature toward promotional dollars in the U.S. marketplace, where value can be grown for their products. The U.S. market is

the single largest market for Alaska seafood products, and he advised that the state needed to continue to capitalize on this and grow it.

MR. WOODROW said that as Ms. Decker had pointed out, Alaska has a lot of challenges in the international marketplace. Reciprocity with Russia is only fair if there is no U.S. access to Russia's markets and Russia cannot access U.S. markets. He said that until this is corrected, it is important to ensure that Alaska fishermen and processors have a fair opportunity to compete in the U.S. marketplace.

MR. WOODROW said that as the markets were beginning to see positive change for Alaska, it is important that the current Russian seafood ban stays in place. He said that while prices came up last year, it does not mean that the entirety of the state's seafood issues have been solved. He said that seeing the ban continue would provide stability, fisherman can get back on their feet and processors can actually predict what is going to happen in the future and get profits returned back to the State of Alaska.

[9:21:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked whether there has been consideration including conversations about the impact of Russia and Chinese strategic partnerships, she noted that at one point it was 30 percent of the domestic market. She said the resolution is great but there is a bigger picture and China was part of that picture.

MR. WOODROW said that this has not been discussed at a great level of detail, but it is something worth bringing up. Domestic and international trade relations have been an incredible challenge over the last few years. He said that Alaska seafood exports have changed "substantially." He noted that prior to 2018, China used to be a large export market at around \$1 billion; now exports are approximately \$500 million. He affirmed that there were challenges associated with increased cooperation between North Korea, China, and Russia, and it has made it more difficult for Alaska to compete.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE commented that she had no intention of slowing down the resolution but thought that conversations for a second resolution might be appropriate in order to highlight other issues in the seafood markets.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE said that Alaska used to have a stack in the Ukrainian market for some time. She asked whether that market has been able to open up at all in the recent year given shifts in the current war.

MR. WOODROW responded that Eastern European markets continue to be volatile due to ongoing military conflict in Ukraine. He said that Ukraine was a growing export market for Alaska seafood products: however, there is still some limited product going into this market. He said that there were increased exports going into neighboring countries. This could be attributed to outward migration of Ukrainian residents or simply because it is easier to do business in adjacent countries.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked whether it would help the resolution by including topics pertaining to Russian seafood sales to European markets using Alaska branding. Additionally, she asked whether mentioning previous markets in Ukraine was appropriate or would make the resolution too convoluted.

MR. WOODROW responded that it would substantially increase the size of the resolution. He was unsure whether it would hurt the proposed resolution because it covers a similar topic regarding challenges with Russia and competition in the global marketplace. He explained that as currently proposed HJR 29, Version N, was very specific to the U.S. marketplace. He said that if it was the committee's will, ASMI could help with adding more components to highlight issues in international markets, including the issue with false Alaska branding. He said that ASMI could assist drafting another resolution as well.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE appreciated the clarification and noted that a separate resolution might be most appropriate to address these other issues.

[9:25:42 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that HJR 29, Version N, was held over.

[9:26:28 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Fisheries meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.