

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC AFFAIRS**

February 27, 2025

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Scott Kawasaki

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Donald Olson  
Senator Bill Wielechowski

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9

Recognizing and honoring the relationship between Canada and Alaska; and recognizing the importance of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement negotiated by President Donald J. Trump in October of 2018.

- MOVED SJR 9 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 9

SHORT TITLE: RECOGNIZING ALASKA/CANADA RELATIONSHIP

SPONSOR(s): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC AFFAIRS

02/19/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/19/25	(S)	AAF
02/27/25	(S)	AAF AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

IntiMayo Harbison, Staff  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented SJR 9 on behalf of the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs, Senator Giessel, Chair.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:30:13 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL called the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kawasaki, Stevens, and Chair Giessel.

**SJR 9-RECOGNIZING ALASKA/CANADA RELATIONSHIP**

[1:30:45 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 9 Recognizing and honoring the relationship between Canada and Alaska; and recognizing the importance of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement negotiated by President Donald J. Trump in October of 2018.

[1:31:02 PM](#)

IntiMayo Harbison, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the following sponsor statement for SJR 9 on behalf of the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs, Senator Giessel, Chair:

[Original punctuation provided.]

COMMITTEE SPONSOR STATEMENT

Senate Joint Resolution 9 highlights the importance of the Alaska - Canada relationship and the longstanding ties and friendship shared between the State of Alaska and the Nation of Canada. As Arctic neighbors we share a common bond and often rely on one another to effectively manage resources, trade, defense, tourism, and many other aspects of our daily lives.

Recent discussions and statements from the Federal Government have caused concern within Alaska that our vital relationship with Canada may be threatened. While supportive of the desire to be more self-sufficient, the reality is that Alaska finds itself without a land border to the contiguous lower 48 states, without reliable sources of building materials, without reliable sources of energy, without reliable sources of food, and entirely reliant on imports to the state, many of which originate from Canada or pass through Canadian territories or waters.

The President of the United States, Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Order in January of 2025 titled,

"Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential". While supportive of these measures, it must be made clear that impacts to access, or restrictions to access, of materials from the Nation of Canada will irrevocably harm the goal of unleashing Alaska's resource potential goals.

Senate Joint Resolution 9 gives historical context of the United States - Canada relationship, and the Alaska - Canada relationship, and humbly implores the United States Federal Government not to impose measures that would jeopardize the best interests of Alaska.

[1:32:59 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL asked Mr. Harbison to highlight important segments of SJR 9.

[1:33:19 PM](#)

MR. HARBISON said the operative clauses in SJR 9 are [found on Page 3, line 18 through Page 4, line 2]:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the vibrancy and importance of the Alaska-Canada relationship as the world increasingly recognizes the strategic, economic, environmental, and cultural importance of the Arctic; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature believes that Canada and Alaska must continue to work together to make our citizens' lives better, safer, more prosperous, and more affordable; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the importance of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement negotiated by President Donald J. Trump in 2018 and recognizes the economic and trade relationships between our nation and Canada and Alaska and Canada; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature opposes any restrictive trade measures that would harm the unique relationship between Canada and Alaska or negatively affect our integrated economies; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature honors Alaska's alliance with Canada and looks forward to many more years of cooperation, friendship, trade, tourism, cultural exchange, and good will.

[1:34:52 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked whether the federal tariff changes announced today by the President of the United States will affect the language in SJR 9.

[1:35:27 PM](#)

MR. HARBISON replied that SJR 9 does not reference specific trade measures but instead applies to all potential restrictive trade measures applicable to both current and future federal proposals.

[1:35:51 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI opined that this makes sense.

[1:35:53 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL directed attention to SJR 9, page 3, lines 15 - 17, which refers to restrictive trade measures that threaten this unique, mutually beneficial relationship and could harm economies. She stated that this is as specific as the resolution gets, as the language is broad.

SENATOR KAWASAKI agreed that the language is broad.

[1:36:22 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS emphasized that the United States and Canada have fought wars together and have remained close allies. He noted that Canadian soldiers experienced some of the highest death tolls during World War II, particularly during the Normandy Invasion. He said Canada stood alongside the United States in many wars and referenced SJR 9, page 1, line 15 through page 2, line 3, which reads:

WHEREAS the United States and Canada have been close allies, serving on battlefields alongside one another in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, the Kosovo War, and the War on Terror, including the Global Coalition against Daesh;

SENATOR STEVENS asked about the Global Coalition against Daesh.

MR. HARBISON expressed his understanding that Daesh is the technical term for the Islamic State (ISIS).

SENATOR STEVENS remarked that Canada and the United States have shared an extraordinary relationship. He noted that the United States has called on Canada in nearly every war since World War I.

[1:37:20 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL said when the United States must rally a military defense, it is Canada that joins the effort. She noted that Canada responds when Chinese and Russian vessels and aircraft approach United States borders.

CHAIR GIESSEL drew attention to a packet of informational documents [available at: [akleg.gov](http://akleg.gov)] that provides data on:

- The integrated economy of Alaska and Canada, including investments and various partnerships.
- The partnership between the United States and Canada in energy dominance and security.
- The shared commitment of the United States and Canada to security, defense, and military alliances worldwide.
- The strong Arctic partnership between the United States and Canada, including the role of Canadian rangers.
- Canada's critical mineral exports to the United States. She specifically mentioned potash and germanium, noting that Canada refines germanium from the Red Dog Mine and highlighted that China has banned the export of germanium.

CHAIR GIESSEL said this is a special opportunity to recognize the partnership between Alaska and Canada and the partnership between the United States and Canada.

[1:39:26 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony on SJR 9; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[1:39:43 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL solicited the will of the committee.

[1:39:45 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report SJR 9, work order 34-LS0597\N, from committee with individual recommendations, attached fiscal note(s), and authorization for Legislative Legal Services to make conforming and technical changes.

[1:40:06 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL found no objection and SJR 9 was reported from the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs.

[1:40:25 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs meeting at 1:40 p.m.