

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC AFFAIRS**  
**MARCH 5, 2026**  
**1:30 P.M.**

**DRAFT**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Bill Wielechowski

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Donald Olson  
Senator Scott Kawasaki

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Recognizing and honoring the relationship between the state and Greenland; and recognizing the importance of cooperation between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Denmark in the Arctic.

- MOVED CSSJR 24(AAF) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 24

SHORT TITLE: HONORING RELATIONSHIP WITH GREENLAND

SPONSOR(s): SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ARCTIC AFFAIRS

02/06/26	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/06/26	(S)	AAF, RES
02/26/26	(S)	AAF AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/26/26	(S)	Heard & Held
02/26/26	(S)	MINUTE(AAF)
03/05/26	(S)	AAF AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SAMANTHA FREEBORN, Staff  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a recap of SJR 24.

BEN GOLTZ, Intern  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Explained the changes Amendment 1 proposes to make to SJR 4.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:30:32 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 Wielechowski, Kawasaki, and Chair Giessel.

**SJR 24-HONORING RELATIONSHIP WITH GREENLAND**

[1:31:01 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced the consideration of SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24 Recognizing and honoring the relationship between the state and Greenland; and recognizing the importance of cooperation between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Denmark in the Arctic.

CHAIR GIESSEL invited her staff, Ms. Freeborn, to give a recap of SJR 24.

[1:31:29 PM](#)

SAMANTHA FREEBORN, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, gave a recap of SJR 24 with prepared remarks:

SJR 24 recognizes and honors the longstanding relationship between the United States of America and Greenland and underscores the importance of continued cooperation between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark in the Arctic.

As Arctic neighbors, the United States and Greenland share a longstanding indigenous culture, extraordinary environments, and natural resources. Together, we face common challenges directly affecting our remote communities, such as coastal erosion, food security, and infrastructure needs.

SJR 24 affirms a commitment to fostering friendship, mutual respect, and long-term cooperation between the people of Alaska and Greenland in support of a peaceful, prosperous, and resilient Arctic.

[1:32:29 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL said the committee received one amendment for consideration.

CHAIR GIESSEL solicited a motion.

[1:32:38 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 34-LS1419\A.1.

34-LS1419\A.1  
Bergerud  
2/28/26

**A M E N D M E N T 1**

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR GIESSEL  
TO: SJR 24

Page 2, following line 1:

Insert new material to read:

**"WHEREAS** the United States of America has, at various times, maintained an expanded military presence in Greenland, including during World War II under agreements with the Danish government during the German occupation of Denmark, and that presence neither intended nor established sovereignty, ownership, or territorial control by the United States of America; and"

Page 2, line 2:

Delete "American"  
Insert "America"

[1:32:40 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR GIESSEL invited her intern to explain Amendment 1.

[1:32:54 PM](#)

BEN GOLTZ, Intern, Senator Cathy Giessel, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained the changes in Amendment 1, stating the amendment:

- Inserts a clause on page 2, following line 1, which clarifies the history of the United States' involvement with Greenland to better inform our understanding of how we arrived at our current relationship with Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark.
- Corrects a misspelling, replacing the word "American" with "America" on page 2, line 2.

[1:33:51 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL removed her objection. She found no further objection, and Amendment 1 was adopted. She noted that a committee member said the amendment was important to clarify misinformation in the resolution.

[1:34:09 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL opened public testimony on SJR 24; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[1:34:21 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL solicited the will of the committee.

[1:34:24 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI moved to report SJR 24, work order 34-LS1419\A, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s) and to authorize Legislative Legal Services to make technical changes.

[1:34:41 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI said he wanted to place a matter on the record. He explained that the legislature received numerous questions about the potential deployment of approximately 1,500 soldiers from the 11th Airborne Division to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Among those inquiries was a question from Peter Moller, a journalist in Denmark working for the national television broadcaster TV 2. He said the journalist asked about the 11th Airborne Division, which is stationed at Fort Wainwright in Fairbanks and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, and about the deployment of the soldiers.

SENATOR KAWASAKI said the journalist relayed that several military analysts in Denmark had expressed concern that the 11th Airborne Division might be on heightened readiness because

President Trump was considering using the division in a military operation related to Greenland. He said the analysts noted that the division is particularly suited for Arctic operations.

SENATOR KAWASAKI remarked that it was striking to receive national media attention on the issue during that period. He said he responded that the 11th Airborne Division is the nation's Arctic fighting force, and that Alaskans are proud of the unit, but that the United States does not attack its allies. He indicated that the response appeared sufficient for the journalist. He cautioned that statements made on social media can create international ripples. He expressed appreciation for the intent of the resolution and supports it.

[1:36:28 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL found no further comments and CSSJR 24(AAF) was reported from the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs.

[1:36:50 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Giessel adjourned the Senate Special Committee on Arctic Affairs meeting at 1:36 p.m.