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IN THE HOUSE

BY MR. LONGWORTH

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 50

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

TO THE HONORABLE FRED A. SEATON, SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR:

Your Memorialist, the Legislature of the State of Alaska in First Legislature, Second Session assembled respectfully submits that:

WHEREAS, Alaska, by constitutional ordinance Number 3 has abolished fish traps by an overwhelming majority in a statewide plebiscite; and

WHEREAS, the First State Legislature of the State of Alaska has by statute made the operation of fish traps in any of the waters of Alaska a criminal offense; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood in general convention assembled at Yakutat, Alaska, in November 1959, by resolution reiterated a long standing policy against the use of fish traps; and

WHEREAS, the villages of Kake, Angoon and Metlakatla, in common with other cities and villages in Alaska, have consistently voted in favor of the abolition of fish traps; and

WHEREAS, the people of Alaska in the state constitution and by ratification of the Statehood Act, Public Law 508 never relinquished the power to conserve their fisheries resources; and

WHEREAS, fish traps are a device used in the taking of migratory salmon which belong to all of the people and not merely any favored few; and

WHEREAS, the contemplated use of fish traps is not only inimical to the sustained yield principle of conservation but

1 also creates great inequities in competition among individual
2 fishermen on the basis of race; and

3 WHEREAS, the Organized Villages of Kake and Angoon were put
4 into the commercial fish trap business by the Department of the
5 Interior less than 15 years ago and the Metlakatla Indian
6 Community began the fish trap and canning business less than 50
7 years ago under federal auspices, none of the three villages can
8 claim modern commercial fish trapping as a custom dating from
9 time immemorial; and

10 WHEREAS, any rules or regulations promulgated by the Federal
11 Government for Alaska which would result in discrimination between
12 the races or preferential treatment for federal Indian corpora-
13 tions as opposed to all other fishermen in the state are not in
14 the best interests of the whole people;

15 NOW THEREFORE, Your Memorialist respectfully urges that the
16 Department of the Interior refrain from authorizing the organized
17 villages of Kake, Angoon, and Metlakatla to operate fish traps.
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