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Introduced: 4/7/69  
Referred: State Affairs

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY METCALF AND RETTIG

2 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 57

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Requesting the construction of two  
6 additional sea-train slip facilities  
7 at the Port of Seward.

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 WHEREAS Seward, Alaska, the southern terminus of the Alaska Railroad,  
10 has served as the principal port of entry for steamships carrying freight  
11 destined for the interior of Alaska via the Alaska Railroad for over 50 years,  
12 and such transportation has been the major source of revenue for the commu-  
13 nity; and

14 WHEREAS the earthquake of March 27th, 1964, with the accompanying tidal  
15 wave, completely destroyed the freight handling facilities at the Port of  
16 Seward and forced steamship carriers engaged in Alaska shipping to seek  
17 alternate routes to the interior of Alaska, leaving Seward without a single  
18 scheduled carrier ship for nearly two years; and

19 WHEREAS the Task Force for the reconstruction of the 1964 disaster area  
20 recommended that the Port of Seward be restored to its former capacity and  
21 that the railroad track between Seward and Portage be rehabilitated and re-  
22 stored; and

23 WHEREAS subsequently a modern dock was constructed at the Port of Seward  
24 at a cost of approximately 15 million dollars, providing for berthing and un-  
25 loading facilities for the conventional van carrying ships enroute from  
26 Seattle to Alaska, but no provision was made for sea-train slip unloading  
27 facilities; and

28 WHEREAS Seward Harbor is the only year-round ice free deep water port  
29 with three-way transportation access to the interior of Alaska by railroad,

1 highway and airfield facilities; and

2 WHEREAS recognizing the increased volume of merchandise shipped to  
3 Alaska in rail cars, the Alaska Steamship Company, in January of 1969,  
4 completely suspended the operation of vanships to the Port of Seward, leaving  
5 that port without shipping; and

6 WHEREAS annual ice conditions in Cook Inlet could interrupt shipping  
7 destined for the interior of Alaska, and hostile ice action could close the  
8 Whittier - Portage Railroad Tunnel, thereby disrupting all shipping from the  
9 Port of Whittier to the interior of Alaska; and

10 WHEREAS, at present, when world conditions are so unsettled and millions  
11 of dollars are being spent for national defense, it would seem imperative  
12 that a three-way transportation access port of entry be continually main-  
13 tained on an operational basis, so that in case of an international  
14 emergency it could be made available for the handling of emergency shipping  
15 to the interior of Alaska;

16 BE IT RESOLVED that the Sixth Alaska State Legislature respectfully re-  
17 quests in the interests of national defense, and the economic well-being of  
18 the state, the construction of two modern and adequate sea-train slip faci-  
19 ties at the year-round ice free deep water Port of Seward, Alaska.

20 COPIES of this Resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Richard M.  
21 Nixon, President of the United States; the Honorable John A. Volpe, Secretary  
22 of Transportation; the Honorable Melvin R. Laird, Secretary of Defense; the  
23 Honorable Walter J. Hickel, Secretary of the Department of the Interior; and  
24 to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Mike Gravel, U. S. Senators,  
25 and the Honorable Howard W. Pollock, U. S. Representative, members of the  
26 Alaska delegation in Congress.  
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