

Introduced: 3/29/76
Referred: Commerce

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE RULES COMMITTEE

2 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 117

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 Requesting a study of waterborne commerce
6 and the regulation of maritime traffic in
7 Alaska.

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

9 WHEREAS waterborne commerce to and from the state continues to increase
10 as economic expansion requires the supplying of equipment, materials and con-
11 sumer goods, subjecting the state's ports and waterways to intense use; and

12 WHEREAS, at the same time, the number of motor-powered vessels regis-
13 tered in Alaska is increasing by 4,000 new vessels a year, including pleasure
14 craft and fishing vessels; and

15 WHEREAS these fishing vessels and pleasure craft frequently compete with
16 commercial traffic for use of the state's navigable waterways and harbor
17 facilities throughout the state; the needs of these users of the state's
18 waters frequently conflict, and as a result there have been increased losses
19 of fishing gear, innumerable boating accidents, and the creation of other
20 man-made hazards to navigation; and

21 WHEREAS in this competitive maritime environment Alaska has the highest
22 number of boating-related fatalities per thousand persons of any state in the
23 nation -- a death rate almost 30 times higher than the national average;
24 nevertheless, Alaska is one of only three states that has yet to enact state
25 legislation conforming to the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-75);
26 and

27 WHEREAS the expansion of fisheries jurisdiction, offshore oil develop-
28 ment, and further increase in tanker traffic to service this expanded oil and
29 gas development will only further exacerbate a serious marine traffic manage-

1 ment problem and impose even greater pressure on existing inadequate port
2 facilities; and

3 WHEREAS, dating from the territorial era, the State of Alaska continues
4 to rely heavily upon the personnel, ships and aircraft of the United States
5 Coast Guard to provide assistance in state law enforcement activities and
6 responsibilities; the Coast Guard, however, already is spread thin along the
7 waterways of a state that has the longest coastline of any state in the
8 nation; further, the pursuit of its traditional federal mission -- fisheries
9 patrol, air and sea search and rescue operations, and continuous surveillance
10 to maintain open the nation's lanes of commerce -- already imposes an almost
11 impossible task upon the Coast Guard's limited personnel and equipment
12 resources;

13 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests
14 the Legislative Council to undertake an interim study of the state's plans to
15 meet its needs for the development and regulation of waterborne commerce and
16 maritime traffic and for the expansion of necessary port and harbor facili-
17 ties, including but not limited to the following:

18 (1) the conduct of a survey, and the preparation of an inventory,
19 of all existing ports, harbors and port facilities, whether state or munici-
20 pally owned, or under private concessions or publicly granted franchise;

21 (2) on the basis of the survey and inventory conducted under (1)
22 above, the need for and the feasibility of formulating a comprehensive state
23 master or general plan for the development of new, and the expansion of
24 existing, ports, harbors and port facilities under AS 30.15, including

25 (A) the engineering practicality and economic feasibility of
26 integrating existing state port facilities, including state ferry ter-
27 minals, with projected port facilities and ferry terminals at appro-
28 priate locations; and

29 (B) the methods of financing port, harbor and port facilities

1 development, including but not limited to revenue and general obligation
2 bonds, federal grants and loans, and the availability of other methods
3 of private and public financing;

4 (3) the feasibility of establishing a state vessel registration
5 system under the Federal Boat Safety Act of 1971 (P.L. 92-75), in lieu of the
6 present system of vessel registration administered by the United States Coast
7 Guard;

8 (4) the need for adoption of a uniform state system of port,
9 harbor and waterways regulations, including but not limited to uniform marine
10 pilotage rules and a uniform system of navigational markings in the waterways
11 of the state that will enhance the efficient management of marine traffic and
12 port operations in a manner that complements, but is not in conflict with,
13 existing municipal ordinances and applicable federal laws and regulations,
14 and for the effective enforcement of these regulations to reduce the con-
15 flicts between users of the state's navigable waters, ports and harbors; and
16 be it

17 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Council is respectfully requested
18 to present its findings and recommendations for appropriate legislation in a
19 report to the legislature not later than 30 days after the convening of the
20 Tenth Legislature, First Session.