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Referred: Resources

1 IN THE SENATE

BY THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

2 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 53 am H

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 Commending the United States Coast Guard.

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

7 WHEREAS in Alaska and its adjacent waters the officers and personnel,  
8 the vessels and aircraft, of the United States Coast Guard must patrol some  
9 of the world's most treacherous navigable waterways; and

10 WHEREAS this continuous patrol embraces 31,383 statute miles of tidal  
11 shoreline, a coastline longer than that of the remaining 49 states combined  
12 -- some 50 per cent of the nation's entire coastal waters and 65 per cent of  
13 the continental shelf; in that marine environment the Coast Guard's fisheries  
14 patrol protects our state's most valuable renewable resource from incessant  
15 attempts at encroachment by ever-increasing numbers of vessels operating as a  
16 part of sophisticated foreign fishing fleets; and

17 WHEREAS, in pursuit of its principal mission of search and rescue from  
18 the air and on the sea, the Coast Guard has maintained a high standard of  
19 vigilance to ensure protection of human life; the heroic feats of Coast Guard  
20 men and women engaged in these life-saving endeavors are legion; and

21 WHEREAS since early territorial days the U.S. Coast Guard has played a  
22 significant role in effective law enforcement in Alaska; it has transported  
23 both territorial and state officers to remote communities where the only  
24 means of communication were Coast Guard ships or aircraft; and

25 WHEREAS frequently these sometimes near-impossible tasks have been  
26 accomplished with an inadequate complement of personnel and equipment; and

27 WHEREAS the extension of control of our fisheries to a point 200 miles  
28 beyond the nation's shoreline will impose additional manpower and equipment  
29 burdens on the Coast Guard; and

1       WHEREAS one of the traditional functions of the Coast Guard has been to  
2 maintain and protect the lanes of commerce; perhaps nowhere in the world,  
3 surely nowhere in the United States, has that task proven a greater challenge  
4 than in Alaska: the opening of the icy passages of the Bering Straits and  
5 Arctic Ocean to the North Slope-bound "Sealift" during the summer of 1976 was  
6 testimony to the Coast Guard's effective response to the exigencies of  
7 nature; without the materials supplied by "Sealift '76" the timetable for  
8 completion of a project critical to the nation's energy needs and to national  
9 defense surely would have been set back; and

10       WHEREAS the development of a unique vessel traffic control system for  
11 the Port of Valdez and Prince William Sound, as an integral part of the  
12 marine leg of the trans-Alaska pipeline system, has required the installation  
13 of a sophisticated system of navigational controls designed to bring the  
14 world's largest oil tankers safely through some of the world's most hazardous  
15 waters -- a responsibility that only could be met by a service whose long  
16 experience in Alaska has gained for it the intimate knowledge of, and respect  
17 for, the demands of the sea upon man and his ships;

18       BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature salutes the United  
19 States Coast Guard for its resourcefulness and intrepidity in the maintenance  
20 of effective surveillance programs and the initiation of swift, positive  
21 action for the protection of Alaskans for more than a century and extends the  
22 appreciation of the people of this state, acknowledging their indebtedness to  
23 the men and women of the United States Coast Guard for a job well done.

24       COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Gerald R. Ford,  
25 President of the United States; the Honorable William T. Coleman, Secretary  
26 of the U.S. Department of Transportation; Admiral Owen W. Siler, Commandant,  
27 U.S. Coast Guard; and to Rear Admiral John B. Hayes, Commander, 17th U.S.  
28 Coast Guard District.