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Referred: Resources

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY FULLER, CHUCKWUK, HURLBERT,
SUTCLIFFE AND VASKA

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 74

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

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TWELFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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Requesting the Secretary of Commerce
6 to disapprove certain portions of the
7 Bering-Chukchi Sea Fishery Management
8 Plan.

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

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WHEREAS the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has prepared and
11 sent to the Secretary of Commerce a Fishery Management Plan for Bering-Chukchi
12 Sea herring; and

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WHEREAS the stocks of Bering-Chukchi Sea herring have not fully recov-
14 ered from overharvesting by foreign trawl and gillnet fisheries during the
15 1960's and 1970's; and

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WHEREAS, because very little is known about the management of herring
17 stocks, they have been subject to extreme fluctuations and overharvest world-
18 wide; and

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WHEREAS the Bering-Chukchi Sea herring plan provides that, in years in
20 which commercial sac roe fishermen and subsistence fishermen harvest less
21 than the optimum yield of the fishery in Alaska coastal waters, herring may
22 be harvested on the high seas; and

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WHEREAS the best scientific information available has revealed that
24 discrete stocks of herring spawn in separate areas along Alaska's Bering Sea
25 coast during the spring, but that the stocks commingle northwest of the
26 Pribilof Islands along the Continental Slope during the winter; and

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WHEREAS a high seas harvest of these mixed stocks does not allow for
28 management of the discrete stocks by either the Alaska Department of Fish and
29 Game or by the National Marine Fisheries Service; and

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1 WHEREAS mixed stock fisheries unreasonably jeopardize the smaller,
2 individual stocks of herring that spawn north of Cape Newenham, especially if
3 the guideline harvest for these stocks has been harvested inshore and are
4 then subject to additional harvest on the high seas; and

5 WHEREAS the subsistence herring fishery along the Alaska coast is the
6 most important food source for the villagers of Nelson Island and is a supple-
7 ment to the diets of other villagers along Alaska's Bering Sea coast; and

8 WHEREAS the coastal commercial sac roe harvest is an important source of
9 income for the cash-poor villagers along Alaska's Bering Sea coast, as well
10 as an important fishery for other residents of Alaska and other states; and

11 WHEREAS sac roe herring harvested inshore by hundreds of small U.S.
12 fishing boats and processed by dozens of domestic processors contributes far
13 more to the U.S. economy than the same amount of food and bait herring har-
14 vested by a small number of large trawlers and processed by foreign factory
15 ships; and

16 WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature is responsible for the health and
17 welfare of the people and resources of Alaska;

18 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its disappro-
19 val of those portions of the Bering-Chukchi Sea Fishery Management Plan that
20 provide for a high seas herring fishery; and be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of Commerce is respectfully requested
22 to disapprove those portions of the plan that provide for a high seas herring
23 fishery, and return the plan to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council;
24 and be it

25 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of Commerce is respectfully requested
26 to direct the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to rewrite those por-
27 tions of the plan that deal with a high seas harvest of herring so as to
28 advise against an offshore allocation until scientific information clearly
29 demonstrates that a high seas fishery of discrete stocks would not harm the

1 inshore fishery.

2 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Malcolm
3 Baldrige, Secretary of Commerce; William G. Gordon, Assistant Administrator
4 of Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and to the
5 Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U. S. Senators, and
6 the Honorable Don Young, U. S. Representative, members of the Alaska delega-
7 tion in Congress.

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