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Referred: Resources

1 IN THE SENATE

BY FERGUSON AND SACKETT

2 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 60  
3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
4 TWELFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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

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

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

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

16 WHEREAS, there is very little known about the management of herring  
17 stocks worldwide in that they have been subject to extreme fluctuations and  
18 overharvest; and

19 WHEREAS, the Bering-Chukchi herring plan provides for the high seas  
20 harvest of herring in those years when the entire optimum yield of the fishery  
21 is not harvested in the coastal waters of Alaska by either the commercial sac  
22 roe or subsistence fishery; and

23 WHEREAS, according to the best scientific information available, while  
24 the discrete stocks of herring spawn in separate areas along Alaska's Bering  
25 Sea coast during the spring months, during the winter these stocks co-mingle  
26 northwest of the Pribilof Islands along the Continental Slope; and

27 WHEREAS, a harvest of herring on the high seas is a harvest on these  
28 mixed stocks, which does not allow for management of the discrete stocks by  
29 either the Alaska Department of Fish and Game or by the National Marine  
X

1 Fisheries Service; and

2 WHEREAS, mixed stock fisheries can unreasonably jeopardize the smaller,  
3 individual stocks of herring which spawn north of Cape Newenham, especially  
4 if the guideline harvest for these stocks have been harvested in-shore and are  
5 then subject to additional harvest on the high seas; and

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

9 WHEREAS, the coastal commercial and sac roe harvest is an important  
10 source of income for the cash-poor villagers of Nelson Island and is a supple-  
11 ment to the diets of other villagers along Alaska's Bering Sea coast; and

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

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

20 WHEREAS, the Alaska State Legislature is responsible for the health and  
21 well-being of the people and the resources of the State;

22 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its disappro-  
23 val of those portions of the Bering-Chukchi Sea Fishery Management Plan which  
24 provides for a high seas herring fishery; and

25 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the  
26 Secretary of Commerce disapprove those portions of the plan which provide for  
27 a high seas herring fishery and return such plan to the North Pacific Fish-  
28 eries Management Council; and

29 FURTHER RESOLVED that the North Pacific Fisheries Management Council;

X

1 upon receipt of the plan from the Secretary of Commerce, rewrite those por-  
2 tions of the plan which deal with a high seas harvest of herring and eliminate  
3 them in order to conserve and develop the individual stocks of Bering-Chukchi  
4 Sea herring.

5 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Secretary of Commerce, the  
6 Assistant Administrator of Fisheries for the National Marine Fisheries Service,  
7 Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Frank Murkowski, Congressman Don Young, Chairman  
8 Clem Tillion, Governor Jay S. Hammond, and Commissioner Ronald O. Skoog.

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