

Offered: 3/27/86
Referred: Rules

Original sponsors: Sund, Szymanski,
Goll, et al

1 IN THE HOUSE BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
2 SENATE CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 51 (Resources)
3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
4 FOURTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION
5 Relating to Coast Guard user fees.
6 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:
7 WHEREAS the United States Senate is considering, as part of Senate
8 Concurrent Resolution 32, a proposal to impose user fees on commercial
9 fishing and recreational boat owners; and
10 WHEREAS it is inappropriate to require boat owners, rather than the
11 general public, to bear the cost of basic governmental functions, such as
12 search and rescue, aiding navigation, and protecting the marine environ-
13 ment; and
14 WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature strongly objects to imposing user
15 fees on small commercial fishing vessel operators, especially because there
16 is no guarantee that funds raised by user fees would be earmarked for
17 boating purposes; and
18 WHEREAS it would be inequitable for boat owners to bear the entire
19 cost of user fees, since in Alaska, unlike other states, the "users" of the
20 above-mentioned Coast Guard services include not only boat owners, but also
21 mountain climbers, hikers, hunters, users of canoes and kayaks, persons in
22 need of medivac and other emergency aid in rural villages and remote areas,
23 aviators who rely on navigation aids, and persons dependent upon marine
24 shipments for necessities; and
25 WHEREAS vessel owners are already subject to federal motorboat fuel
26 taxes intended for boating and fishing enhancement; and
27 WHEREAS the proposed fee structure discriminates against smaller
28 commercial fishing vessel operators by charging a flat annual fee of \$540
29 for each commercial vessel under five gross tons, which is substantially

1 more burdensome than the fee proposed for larger commercial vessels; and

2 WHEREAS the user fees proposed for the owners of small fishing boats
3 in Alaska would, in many cases, exceed the owners' annual net income and
4 thereby force the owners out of business; and

5 WHEREAS the fixed rate structure for user fees being considered does
6 not allow for adjustments during lean years in the Alaska commercial fish-
7 ing industry; and

8 WHEREAS the proposal would likely result in a doubling of fees in
9 federal fiscal years 1987 through 1990; and

10 WHEREAS since Coast Guard services are almost entirely unavailable in
11 many of the remote areas of Alaska, it is inequitable to charge owners in
12 those remote areas the same fee charged vessel owners in areas that are
13 well serviced by the Coast Guard;

14 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests
15 that the President of the United States direct the Secretary of Transporta-
16 tion to reject the proposed imposition of Coast Guard user fees on boat
17 owners, or in the alternative, to approve the proposed user fees only if
18 the rate structure equitably distributes the economic burden of the fees
19 among all users of Coast Guard services and avoids a severe economic impact
20 on Alaska commercial fishermen.

21 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald
22 Reagan, President of the United States; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens
23 and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don
24 Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.