

BY HOFFMAN, GOLL, HERRMANN,
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1 IN THE HOUSE

2

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Relating to high seas drift nets.

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

7 WHEREAS Alaska's salmon resources have a tremendous value to all of
8 the residents of the state; and

9 WHEREAS Alaska commercial fishermen depend upon healthy salmon popu-
10 lations to maintain their income and lifestyles; and

11 WHEREAS shore-based and floating processors rely on healthy salmon
12 populations to keep their industry healthy, which in turn, promotes a
13 healthy Alaska economy; and

14 WHEREAS numerous rural communities in Alaska depend upon a reliable
15 subsistence salmon harvest for their most basic nutritional needs and for
16 the continuation of their traditional way of life; and

17 WHEREAS numerous salmon stocks including, among others, Kuskokwim
18 River king salmon and Yukon River fall chum salmon, are showing a marked
19 and dangerous trend of annual declines in the number of returning fish; and

20 WHEREAS high seas drift nets widely used by foreign fishing vessels in
21 the fishery conservation zone indiscriminately harvest mixed stocks of
22 salmon, containing a high proportion of salmon originating in North Ameri-
23 ca; and

24 WHEREAS high seas drift nets wastefully kill nontarget fish species,
25 seabirds, and marine mammals, including the Pribilof Island fur seal whose
26 population is declining; and

27 WHEREAS these nets are made of nonbiodegradable and nondestructible
28 plastics; and

29 WHEREAS 600 miles of high seas drift nets are estimated to be lost

1 each year, and these nets present a hazard to navigation and continue to
2 catch salmon, other fish, seabirds, and marine mammals; and

3 WHEREAS there is no reliable means of monitoring the destructive
4 effect of these high seas drift nets on marine animals of the Bering Sea
5 and North Pacific; and

6 WHEREAS intensive and persistent efforts by the Alaska fishing indus-
7 try and by environmental groups have been largely unsuccessful in achieving
8 international regulation and reduction of the use of high seas drift nets;

9 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urgently requests the
10 Congress to pass S. 62, a bill "To improve efforts to monitor, assess, and
11 reduce the adverse impacts of drift nets."

12 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush,
13 Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the
14 Honorable Jim Wright, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and to
15 the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators,
16 and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
17 delegation in Congress.