Original sponsor: Resources Committee

IN THE HOUSE BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 70 (Resources)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

Relating to the need for ice-capable ships for Arctic research.

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

WHEREAS the renewable resources of the American Arctic, specifically fish and shellfish, represent one of the nation's greatest commercial assets with the value of the Bering Sea fisheries alone being estimated at $2,000,000,000 per year; and

WHEREAS the American Arctic is a vitally important rearing and feeding ground for bottomfish, king crab, and a majority of the salmon stocks that serve as cornerstones for a large number of subsistence activities in the state; and

WHEREAS the biological and physical characteristics of the American Arctic are important with respect to producing large numbers of fish and shellfish in the area and in determining optimal opportunities for harvesting the fish and shellfish; and

WHEREAS the American Arctic has been defined by the U.S. Congress in the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 to include bodies of water that are of great importance to Alaska, such as the Bering Sea, the Chukchi Sea, and the Arctic Ocean; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Research Commission has reported to the President and the Congress that research in the Arctic Ocean and marginal seas is vital not only to the management of renewable resources but also to national security, prediction of weather and climate, and development of nonrenewable resources; and

WHEREAS the commission also reported that most Arctic-rim countries

1 possess Arctic technologies far more advanced than those currently avail-
2 able in the United States, which threatens our national security and se-
3 verely affects the ability of United States citizens to compete in the
4 development of the resources of the Arctic; and
5 WHEREAS the types of research needed to increase our understanding of
6 the structure of the ecosystems of the Bering Sea, the Beaufort Sea, and
7 the Chukchi Sea include elements related to physical features such as ice
8 edges and hydrographic structures; and
9 WHEREAS the United States does not have the ships required to conduct
10 this research, especially since the deactivation of the U.S. Coast Guard
11 Icebreaker "Glacier"; and
12 WHEREAS several foreign icebreakers are currently idle because of the
13 downturn in the oil industry, and one of these vessels might be modified
14 and put under charter to meet immediate needs; and
15 WHEREAS sponsorship of currently neglected research in basic ocean-
16 ographic science is a necessary and proper function of the federal govern-
17 ment in order to fulfill national objectives in Arctic research;
18 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the
19 United States Congress to authorize
20 (1) construction of a new icebreaking vessel for use in Arctic
21 research;
22 (2) upgrading of at least one of the planned U.S. Navy additions
23 to the fleet or construction of an additional vessel capable of Arctic
24 research; and
25 (3) immediate leasing, or leasing with an option to buy, of a
26 foreign icebreaker for use in connection with Arctic research.
27 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush,
28 Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the
29 Honorable Donald P. Hodel, Secretary of the Department of the Interior; the

1 Honorable Jim Wright, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and to
2 the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators,
3 and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
4 delegation in Congress.