

Original sponsor: Resources Committee

1 IN THE HOUSE BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
2 CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 70 (Resources) am S
3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
4 FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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

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

8 WHEREAS the renewable resources of the American Arctic, specifically
9 fish and shellfish, represent one of the nation's greatest commercial
10 assets with the value of the Bering Sea fisheries alone being estimated at
11 \$2,000,000,000 per year; and

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

16 WHEREAS the biological and physical characteristics of the American
17 Arctic are important with respect to producing large numbers of fish and
18 shellfish in the area and in determining optimal opportunities for harvest-
19 ing the fish and shellfish; and

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

24 WHEREAS the Arctic Research Commission has reported to the President
25 and the Congress that research in the Arctic Ocean and marginal seas is
26 vital not only to the management of renewable resources but also to na-
27 tional security, prediction of weather and climate, and development of
28 nonrenewable resources; and

29 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 new icebreaking vessels 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.