

1 IN THE HOUSE

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2

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Encouraging citizen participation in
state-wide beach cleanup and anti-
dumping efforts.

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

9 WHEREAS lost and accidentally and purposely discarded plastic debris,
10 including six-pack yokes, strapping bands, sheeting, packaging material,
11 dunnage, bags, particles, pellets, fishing nets, fishing line, and related
12 fishing gear, are annually killing at least an estimated 1,000,000 sea
13 birds, 100,000 marine mammals, and untold numbers of sea turtles and fish
14 by entanglement in the debris and ingestion of the debris; and

15 WHEREAS many of the fish and wildlife killed by the debris are resi-
16 dent wildlife of the state, and some of this wildlife are listed as deplet-
17 ed under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 - 1407), includ-
18 ing the Steller's sea lion and the northern fur seal, or endangered under
19 the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 - 1543), including the humpback
20 whale, bowhead whale, and Aleutian Canada goose; and

21 WHEREAS plastic debris is generally persistent, durable, and nondegrad
22 able, and may last for hundreds of years or longer; and

23 WHEREAS plastic debris deposited on the state's beaches by tidal
24 action, wind, waves, storms, and similar occurrences may also entangle
25 wildlife, and future storms and high tides may wash the plastic back into
26 the sea where it will continue its lethal effect, possibly for hundreds of
27 years; and

28 WHEREAS, in addition to the problems plastic debris causes to wild-
29 life, garbage-strewn beaches are aesthetically unpleasing, discourage

1 tourism, and are costly to clean, and floating plastics also foul boat
2 propellers, block cooling intake vents, snag fishing equipment, entangle
3 submarines, and endanger divers; and

4 WHEREAS effective December 31, 1988, the Marine Plastic Pollution
5 Research and Control Act of 1987 (33 U.S.C. 1901 - 1912) prohibits vessels
6 from dumping plastics at sea and within the navigable waters of the state,
7 although certain public vessels have five years in which to comply with
8 this prohibition; and

9 WHEREAS enforcement by the United States Coast Guard of these anti-
10 dumping provisions will be difficult, especially since the Coast Guard
11 faces expanding responsibilities and a shrinking budget; and

12 WHEREAS the Marine Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act of 1987
13 contains a provision allowing an informant, in the discretion of the court,
14 to receive up to one-half of the penalty assessed against a violator of the
15 Act;

16 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature strongly encourages
17 all residents of the state to participate in Coastweeks '89, a national
18 beach cleanup effort involving many public and private groups concerned
19 about the environment, by taking part in a June 1989 beach cleanup along
20 the 36,000 miles of the state's accessible shoreline; and be it

21 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature encourages those
22 citizens who witness possible violations of the plastics anti-dumping law
23 to contact the Port Operations Department of their local United States
24 Coast Guard Marine Safety Office and, where possible, to provide the Coast
25 Guard with as much of the following information as possible about the
26 occurrence: date, time, location, witnesses' names, ship or vessel's name
27 and number, photographs, and a sample of the discarded plastic.