

BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

1 IN THE SENATE

2

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 85

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

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SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

Relating to the incidental take of

6

Steller sea lions by commercial fisher-

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ies.

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

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WHEREAS many valuable commercial fisheries exist in Alaska and, out of  
10 all of these commercial fisheries, the salmon fishery provides the most  
11 economic benefit to the people of the state; and

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WHEREAS the continuation of the commercial salmon fishery is jeop-  
13 ardized by an emergency regulation adopted by the National Marine Fisheries  
14 Service on April 5, 1990, declaring the Steller sea lion to be a "threat-  
15 ened" species under the Endangered Species Act and implementing conserva-  
16 tion measures to protect Steller sea lions; and

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WHEREAS one of the conservation measures implemented is a 50 percent  
18 reduction in the number of Steller sea lions, from 1,350 to 675, that may  
19 be incidentally and accidentally caught and killed each year during commer-  
20 cial fishing operations in the waters of Alaska west of Cape Yakataga; and

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WHEREAS once 675 Steller sea lions have been killed by commercial  
22 fishing operations west of Cape Yakataga, the National Marine Fisheries  
23 Service will severely restrict or close commercial fisheries in order to  
24 further protect the Steller sea lion population; and

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WHEREAS the emergency regulation is effective for 240 days, at which  
26 time the National Marine Fisheries Service will formally adopt a regulation  
27 on the status of the Steller sea lion under the Endangered Species Act and  
28 will implement a series of conservation measures that will either be the  
29 same or more stringent than those now in effect; and

1       WHEREAS the National Marine Fisheries Service currently proposes to  
2 calculate the incidental and accidental take of Steller sea lions during  
3 commercial fishing operations on a calendar year basis, which will coincide  
4 with the January 1991 Bering Sea trawl fisheries; and

5       WHEREAS the Bering Sea trawl fishery may take all or most of the total  
6 allowable incidental take of Steller sea lions in 1991 before the salmon  
7 fisheries in Alaska begin; and

8       WHEREAS the Bering Sea trawl fishery is dominated by the factory  
9 trawler fleet based outside Alaska that has a questionable conservation  
10 record and consistently harvests an excessively high number of incidental  
11 species;

12       BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests  
13 the National Marine Fisheries Service to designate June 1, 1991, as the  
14 date at which it will begin its annual count on the incidental take of  
15 Steller sea lions in order to provide the maximum flexibility for Alaska's  
16 vital commercial salmon fisheries.

17       COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush,  
18 President of the United States; the Honorable Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr.,  
19 Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce; the Honorable John Knauss,  
20 Undersecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
21 Administration; the Honorable James W. Brennan, Assistant Administrator for  
22 Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service; Steve Pennoyer, Alaska Re-  
23 gional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service; and to the Honorable  
24 Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the  
25 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation  
26 in Congress.