

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 40

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES GRUSSENDORF, Navarre, Ulmer

Introduced: 4/10/91

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

**1 Requesting an emergency closure of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska to pelagic and on-bottom
2 trawl fishing.**

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

4 WHEREAS evidence indicates that trawl fishing may be implicated in the precipitous decline
5 of populations of Stellar sea lions throughout their range; and

6 WHEREAS establishing a trawl-free zone in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska will provide an ideal
**7 laboratory for comparison of the effects of various fisheries on Stellar sea lion populations and will
8 provide further protection to Stellar sea lions in the one area in which healthy populations remain; and**

9 WHEREAS the Eastern Gulf of Alaska has been a significant hook and line fishing area for
10 almost 100 years and most fisheries in the area are fully utilized by the hook and line fishing fleet; and

11 WHEREAS the intended level of trawl fishing effort in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska during 1991
**12 is unprecedented and is expected to exert undue fishing pressure on fish stocks in the area and displace
13 traditional hook and line fisheries; and**

14 WHEREAS foreign trawl fishing in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska resulted in depressed populations
15 of several species of rockfish; and

16 WHEREAS domestic trawl fishing now threatens these depressed stocks of rockfish; and

1 **WHEREAS** federal fishing regulations require that all fisheries that take a species of fish must
2 be closed when the allowable biological catch for the species is reached; and

3 **WHEREAS** the trawl fishery in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska is rapidly approaching the allowable
4 biological catch for roughey rockfish and shortraker rockfish for 1991; and

5 **WHEREAS** all fisheries, including the longline sablefish fishery, that take roughey rockfish and
6 shortraker rockfish will be closed in order to prevent overfishing of these rockfish once the allowable
7 biological catch is achieved and as a consequence the longline sablefish fishery may be canceled before
8 it can open; and

9 **WHEREAS** the opening of the longline sablefish fishery was delayed until May 15, 1991, at the
10 request of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, in order to reduce the bycatch of halibut; and

11 **WHEREAS** the domestic trawl fishery intends to fish in the same area and during the same time
12 period that has been closed to the longline sablefish fishery to protect halibut; and

13 **WHEREAS** only by closing the Eastern Gulf of Alaska to trawl fishing will halibut receive the
14 full protection necessary to reduce the bycatch of halibut; and

15 **WHEREAS** the bottom habitat in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska is particularly vulnerable to bottom
16 trawling; and

17 **WHEREAS** the narrowness of the continental shelf and continental slope in the Eastern Gulf of
18 Alaska concentrates trawl fishing effort in a small area and as a result prevents recovery of trawl fishing
19 areas and may permanently impoverish the ecosystem of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska;

20 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that United States Secretary of Commerce
21 is respectfully requested to immediately implement emergency regulations closing the Eastern Gulf of
22 Alaska to pelagic and on-bottom trawling.

23 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., Secretary
24 of the U.S. Department of Commerce; the Honorable Steve Pennoyer, Alaska Regional Director, National
25 Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of Commerce; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
26 Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
27 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.