

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 40 (RESOURCES) am

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Amended: 4/26/91

Offered: 4/22/91

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES GRUSSENDORF, Navarre, Ulmer, C.Davis, Leman, Hudson

A RESOLUTION

**1 Requesting a closure of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude
2 to pelagic and on-bottom 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 Steller sea lions; 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 Steller sea lion populations and will
8 provide further protection to Steller 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 of the high value fisheries in the area are fully utilized by the hook and line
11 fishing fleet; and**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14 **WHEREAS** only by closing the Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude to
15 trawl fishing will halibut receive the full protection, as intended by the delayed opening of the longline
16 sablefish fishery season, necessary to reduce the bycatch of halibut; and

17 **WHEREAS** recent trawl fishing for rockfish in the Gulf of Alaska has resulted in a high bycatch
18 of Alaska chinook salmon; and

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

22 **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that United States Secretary of Commerce
23 is respectfully requested to immediately implement emergency and permanent regulations closing the
24 Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude to pelagic and on-bottom trawling.

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