

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

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 5/18/91

Referred: Rules

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

SENATOR Eliason

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 the Eastern Gulf of Alaska has been a significant hook and line fishing area for
5 almost 100 years and most of the high value fisheries in the area are fully utilized by the hook and line
6 fishing fleet; and**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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