

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR ADAMS

Introduced: 2/19/91
Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 Relating to the management of the walrus population.

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

3 WHEREAS the Pacific walrus, which includes about 80 percent of the world's walrus
4 population, occurs primarily in the Bering and Chukchi Seas; and

5 WHEREAS the Pacific walrus population was severely depleted by commercial hunting two
6 times during the past 100 years but has surpassed its pre-exploitation population, and is currently
7 estimated to number approximately 234,000 animals; and

8 WHEREAS the Pacific walrus is harvested by coastal Native people of the state under rights
9 protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 -1407); and

10 WHEREAS, at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and
11 Fauna (CITES) in 1987, the Netherlands with the support of some animal rights groups proposed
12 increasing the protection afforded the Pacific walrus by moving the Pacific walrus from Appendix III
13 to Appendix II of CITES, but the proposal was not adopted; and

14 WHEREAS an Appendix II listing with CITES allows CITES to regulate international trade in
15 a way that may affect the ability of Native residents of the state to use Pacific walrus in traditional and
16 customary ways; and

17 WHEREAS a proposal to change the appendix designation of Pacific walrus may be considered

1 at the 1991 meeting of CITES; and

2 **WHEREAS** the taking of Pacific walrus by Native people in the state has been much less in
3 recent years and is not large enough to endanger the population of Pacific walrus; and

4 **WHEREAS** the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and
5 the Eskimo Walrus Commission have signed a memorandum of agreement to work together to establish
6 and maintain a sound management policy for the health of the Pacific walrus population; and

7 **WHEREAS** the memorandum of agreement and other existing management systems provide
8 adequate mechanisms for conservation of the Pacific walrus population;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature considers any change in the CITES Pacific
10 walrus designation from Appendix III inappropriate since current management of the species has resulted
11 in healthy population levels; and be it

12 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
13 Service, the Eskimo Walrus Commission, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to make a
14 coordinated effort to thwart any proposals to change the appendix designation of Pacific walrus by the
15 Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna.

16 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered
17 Species of Wild Flora and Fauna; the Honorable John F. Turner, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
18 Service; the commissioner of fish and game; the Honorable Benjamin Nageak, Chair of the Eskimo
19 Walrus Commission; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.
20 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in
21 Congress.