

**SCR**

**28**

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Utermohle  
2/27/02

CS FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 28( )  
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:  
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATOR AUSTERMAN

A RESOLUTION

1 Establishing the Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force.

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

3       WHEREAS the salmon industry is one of the cornerstones of the Alaska economy,  
4 supporting tens of thousands of jobs, and salmon is one of our most valuable foreign export  
5 commodities; and

6       WHEREAS the global salmon market has changed considerably in recent years,  
7 placing the Alaska salmon industry in economic peril and threatening not only the main  
8 engine of the rural economy of the state but also a significant contributor to urban economies;  
9 and

10       WHEREAS imports of farmed salmon from nations with a significantly cheaper labor  
11 market are causing harmful revenue losses to the state's general fund and to municipal  
12 budgets; and

13       WHEREAS current inventories of canned Alaska salmon are expected to remain full  
14 well beyond the upcoming salmon season, and a large portion of the fleet-wide production is  
15 processed into cans; and

16       WHEREAS hundreds of harvesters are in danger of actually being without markets

1 and being forced into bankruptcy this year; and

2 **WHEREAS** numerous salmon processing facilities have recently ceased operations or  
3 plan to do so before the 2002 salmon fishing season due to market factors and difficulty in  
4 obtaining operating loans; and

5 **WHEREAS** Alaska wild salmon is a renewable resource that is becoming  
6 increasingly unique in the global market and can provide immeasurable economic benefit to  
7 this state into perpetuity; and

8 **WHEREAS** allocation issues between commercial fishers and sport fishers are  
9 becoming more problematic all the time;

10 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature establishes the Joint Legislative  
11 Salmon Industry Task Force to address those elements of the crisis in the Alaska salmon  
12 industry that can be solved through governmental policy; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall also address those elements of the  
14 crisis in the Alaska salmon industry that can be solved through action on the part of the  
15 industry; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall develop a long-term vision for the  
17 Alaska salmon industry as a critical element of the state's economic future; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force include

19 (1) recommending specific means by which state government can assist one of  
20 the state's most important industries to adapt to changing economics in the most efficient and  
21 effective way possible;

22 (2) recommending public policy options that account for effects on the dozens  
23 of communities that are severely affected by the crisis in the Alaska salmon industry;

24 (3) finding areas of potential improvement to the seafood transportation  
25 infrastructure in the state;

26 (4) recommending improvements for the coordination of the harvesting,  
27 processing, and marketing of wild Alaska salmon;

28 (5) encouraging the development of new product forms for salmon;

29 (6) investigating the feasibility of regional and statewide cooperatives for  
30 fishing, marketing, and transportation for Alaska wild salmon and salmon products;

31 (7) recommending improvements to the marketing efforts of the Alaska

1 salmon industry and ensuring the distinction of Alaska salmon products from farmed salmon;  
2 (8) researching methods to improve the quality of Alaska salmon products;  
3 (9) encouraging Alaska salmon hatcheries to tailor their programs to market  
4 dynamics and to provide the maximum possible percentage of their production to common  
5 property fisheries;

6 (10) contracting and cooperating with appropriate private and public agencies  
7 in order to provide sound economic, social, and environmental data to the decision-making  
8 process;

9 (11) contracting for research, consultants, and staff, as the task force considers  
10 necessary;

11 (12) recommending ways to ensure that the benefit provided to the state as a  
12 result of research efforts is commensurate with the funding for that research;

13 (13) reviewing findings of previous salmon summits and incorporating useful  
14 information in its report; and

15 (14) exploring the potential of regional solutions and not just statewide results;  
16 and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the members of the task force are to conduct their  
18 business with a statewide vision of the crisis in the Alaska salmon industry and the need to  
19 find solutions to the crisis; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be composed of 13 members,  
21 appointed jointly by the president of the senate and speaker of the house of representatives as  
22 follows:

23 (1) two members from the senate;

24 (2) two members from the house of representatives;

25 (3) nine public members who are involved in the commercial salmon industry;

26 and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the members of the task force shall be appointed to  
28 represent the statewide salmon industry as a whole and not just a particular region or  
29 harvesting sector of the industry; and be it

30 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the president of the senate and the speaker of the house  
31 of representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the task force; and be it

1           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force members are entitled to per diem and  
2 travel expenses; and be it

3           **FURTHER RESOLVED** the task force shall schedule meetings to account for  
4 commercial fishing seasons and openings so that no member of the task force must forego  
5 economic opportunity in order to participate in the task force; and be it

6           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall submit a report of its findings and  
7 proposed industry and legislative changes to the legislature by January 31, 2003, and may  
8 make any interim reports it considers advisable; and be it

9           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force is terminated at 11:59 p.m. on March 1,  
10 2003.

11           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the  
12 Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.  
13 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.



## SENATOR ALAN AUSTERMAN

Alaska State Legislature

Interim: 112 Mill Bay Road, Kodiak, Alaska 99615 (907) 486-8872 • Session: State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (907) 465-2487  
senator\_alan\_austerman@legis.state.ak.us

### SPONSOR STATEMENT – SCR 28

#### **“A resolution establishing the Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force”**

Alaska’s salmon industry has recently met with hard times due to a number of factors, from sharp increases in farmed salmon production to the strong U.S. dollar. The downturn in salmon prices is having direct negative impacts on our working families and our communities and is causing hardship throughout our state economy. State government revenues derived from taxation on the industry are also declining as a result, meaning fewer resources are available to fund state government. As leaders of this state, it is incumbent on both houses of the legislature to address this situation with the utmost urgency.

To that end, SCR 28 creates a Joint Legislative Salmon Industry Task Force to address those elements of the crisis that can be solved through governmental policy. After examining the numerous factors affecting various sectors of the industry, the task force will recommend specific means by which state government can assist the industry in the most efficient and effective ways possible. Furthermore, it will address those elements of the crisis that can best be solved through action in the private sector.

The Task Force will be composed of:

- Two members of the Senate
- Two members of the House of Representatives
- Nine members of the public who are involved in the commercial salmon industry
- A chairman and vice-chairman shall be appointed jointly by the Senate President and Speaker of the House.

The Task Force will submit a report of its findings to the legislature, including a long-term vision for the Alaska salmon industry, by January 31, 2003, and will be terminated on March 1, 2003.

Previous salmon summits organized in recent years have produced valuable suggestions, yet Alaska still lacks effective leadership for its salmon industry. This resolution is a major step the Legislature can take towards providing that leadership.