

STATE OF ALASKA
SENATE

1985

Source

SR 4

Senate

Resolve No.

3



Relating to the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

WHEREAS the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals between the United States, Japan, Canada, and the U.S.S.R. is now before the United States Senate for ratification; and

WHEREAS, since the fur seal treaty has been in effect, the fur seal population has increased from 300,000 in 1911 to well over 1.2 million; and

WHEREAS the fur seal treaty, the fur seal harvest, and the welfare of the Pribilof Aleut people are inextricably tied together in very complex ways, both culturally and economically; and

WHEREAS the fur seal harvest on the Pribilof Islands has been taking place since the late 1700's; and

WHEREAS the fur seal harvest remains the main source of income for the residents of the Pribilof Islands while efforts are made to diversify the local economy; and

WHEREAS the fur seal harvest is no longer subsidized by the federal government and will be conducted privately on a self-supporting basis; and

WHEREAS reputable scientists agree the fur seals are not an endangered species; and

WHEREAS the treaty provides for a carefully studied, scientifically controlled harvest of two-year old subadult nonbreeding males only; and

WHEREAS there is no scientific evidence to indicate the current level of the commercial harvest of subadult male seals contributes to any decline in the fur seal population, but to the contrary, evidence suggests that culling subadult males contributes to the overall health of the fur seal herd; and

WHEREAS cooperative and strengthened research, education, management and enforcement programs are the keys to the conservation of the North Pacific fur seal and these activities can best be carried out through the fur seal treaty; and

WHEREAS the National Audubon Society, a respected conservation organization with more than a half-million members, has endorsed the renewal of the fur seal treaty; and

WHEREAS a national campaign, featuring misleading and inaccurate information, has been launched by various wildlife groups to convince the United States Senate to reject the treaty; and

WHEREAS a hearing before the Foreign Relations Committee will afford the representatives of the Pribilof Islands an opportunity to refute the misleading charges made by the treaty opponents, and to present, under oath, substantiated, scientific information in support of the continuation of the fur seal treaty; and

WHEREAS not to provide for a fair hearing on this issue would be disastrous for the Aleut people and would open the way for special interest groups to attack other essential subsistence activities, such as trapping, whaling, and fishing;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate that the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations is respectfully requested to hold prompt hearings on the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Senate is respectfully requested to ratify the Interim Convention on Conservation of North Pacific Fur Seals.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; to the Honorable Robert Dole, Majority Leader of the Senate; to the Honorable Richard G. Lugar, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.