

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1986

Source

SJR 47

Legislative
Resolve No.

42



Requesting additional action by the United States to reduce high seas interception of Alaska-bound salmon.

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

WHEREAS salmon is one of Alaska's most important natural resources; and

WHEREAS Alaskans are heavily dependent upon the harvest of salmon as a source of employment, tax revenue, food, and recreation; and

WHEREAS high seas interceptions by the Japanese mothership and land-based gillnet fleets deprive Alaskans of an estimated \$25,000,000 worth of salmon per year; and

WHEREAS a recently completed agreement calls for only a very gradual phase out of the Japanese mothership fishery in international waters of the Bering Sea; and

WHEREAS the agreement allows the mothership fleet to fish for 140 fleet days within the U.S. 200-mile exclusive economic zone in the Bering Sea during which the Alaska Department of Fish and Game believes significant numbers of Alaska salmon will be intercepted; and

WHEREAS the agreement would move the land-based fleet only one degree to the west of the present abstention line, a movement state fisheries scientists believe would not significantly reduce interceptions of Alaska salmon; and

WHEREAS only one U.S. observer would be placed on Japanese enforcement vessels patrolling the abstention line for the land-based fleet, and no U.S. observers will be allowed on the Japanese fishing vessels; and

WHEREAS the issue of cleanup and responsibility for miles of abandoned pelagic drift nets from the Japanese fishing vessels was not addressed by the agreement; and

WHEREAS the social and economic impacts upon Alaskans of the Japanese high seas interceptions are distressing, particularly in Western Alaska where average annual incomes are well below federal poverty guidelines; and

WHEREAS the Japanese continue to enjoy the privilege of fishing within our 200-mile exclusive economic zone and purchasing raw fisheries resources directly from American fishermen;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its extreme disappointment in the terms of the agreement as accomplishing too little too slowly; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Congressional delegation urge the State Department to aggressively pursue continued efforts to obtain from Japan further reductions in the interception rates of Alaska salmon by the high seas fleets; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the U.S. Coast Guard to station one cutter to patrol the abstention line for the Japanese land-based fleet during the entire fishing season; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Congress to provide funding for the three-to-five year research and monitoring program, including on-board observers, in support of the renegotiations called for in 1990 under the terms of the agreement.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald Reagan, President of the United States; the Honorable George Shultz, Secretary of State; the Honorable Robert Dole, U.S. Senate Majority Leader; the Honorable Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr., Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; to Admiral James S. Gracey, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; to Mr. William Gordon, assistant administrator for fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service; to Mr. Jim Campbell, chairman, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; and to Mr. Clem Tillion, chairman, International North Pacific Fisheries Commission.