

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1986

Source

CSSJR 50(Res)

Legislative
Resolve No.

56



Relating to the incidental catch of high-value fish stocks within the United States exclusive economic zone.

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

WHEREAS art. VIII, sec. 2, Constitution of the State of Alaska, requires the Alaska State Legislature to provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the state for the maximum benefit of the people of the state; and

WHEREAS fisheries are Alaska's most important renewable natural resource; and

WHEREAS the salmon, halibut, and crab fisheries have traditionally provided a major source of employment and income for Alaska fishermen; and

WHEREAS the harvestable surplus of every salmon stock of Alaska origin, and of halibut and crab, are fully used by United States fishermen; and

WHEREAS trawlers incidentally harvest a significant number of salmon of Alaska origin, and of halibut, crab, and other high-value species worth millions of dollars while targeting groundfish in the United States exclusive economic zone; and

WHEREAS the incidental harvest of salmon of Alaska origin, and of halibut and crab, by groundfish trawlers in the United States exclusive economic zone is adversely affecting the resource; and

WHEREAS at times the incidental catch of high-value species by groundfish trawlers in the United States exclusive economic zone has exceeded the catch of these species allocated for Alaska fishermen; and

WHEREAS the incidental catch of salmon of Alaska origin and of halibut, crab, and other high-value species significantly and adversely affect Alaska residents who depend upon them for their livelihood, particularly residents of villages in western Alaska, many of whom have annual incomes that average below federal poverty guidelines; and

WHEREAS United States fishermen are becoming increasingly involved in the harvest of groundfish in the United States exclusive economic zone; and

WHEREAS the development of a new fishery for United States trawlers involved in the harvest of groundfish should not be at the expense of the traditional fisheries of salmon, crab, halibut, and other high-value species; and

WHEREAS the experience with the foreign fishing fleet has demonstrated the ability to reduce significantly the incidental catch of salmon of Alaska origin, halibut, crab, and other high-value species without adversely affecting the fishery; and

WHEREAS the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act is designed to maximize economic benefits to United States citizens from the use of United States fisheries resources; and

WHEREAS the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act assigns the Secretary of Commerce a nondiscretionary duty to enforce the provisions of that Act to significantly reduce the incidental catch of salmon of Alaska origin, halibut, crab, and other high-value species by trawlers involved in the harvest of groundfish; and

WHEREAS the North Pacific Fishery Management Council has the responsibility of implementing the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act and has the authority to implement measures to significantly reduce the incidental catch of salmon of Alaska origin, halibut, crab, and other high-value species by trawlers involved in the harvest of groundfish;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Secretary of Commerce and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to enforce the provisions of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act and to take quick and decisive action to significantly reduce the level of incidental catch of salmon of Alaska origin, halibut, crab, and other high-value species by groundfish trawlers in the United States exclusive economic zone; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the United States Department of Commerce and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council are respectfully requested to develop and enforce specific measures that significantly reduce the incidental catch of high-value species by trawlers and other vessels engaged in ground-fishing that have the least adverse affect on the ability of domestic trawlers to engage in the ground-fishing industry; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Governor of Alaska to aggressively pursue every possible means, including judicial action, of persuading the Secretary of Commerce and the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to enforce the provisions of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act to significantly reduce the

incidental catch of Alaska salmon, crab, halibut, and other high-value species by the groundfish fleets operating in the United States exclusive economic zone, with the least adverse impact on the ability of United States trawlers to participate in the ground-fishing industry; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests the Governor of Alaska to aggressively pursue every possible means of assisting Alaska fishermen who are participating in the ground-fishing industry to significantly reduce the incidental harvest of salmon, crab, halibut, and other high-value species, without adversely affecting their ability to participate in the ground-fishing industry.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Malcolm Baldrige, Secretary of Commerce; Jim Campbell, Chairman, North Pacific Fishery Management Council; and 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.