

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

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Relating to a preference for shore-based processors and small coastal communities in the allocation of the fishery resources of the North Pacific.

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

WHEREAS the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (16 U.S.C. 1802) contains fishery resources of tremendous value, both economically and biologically, to the people of the United States; and

WHEREAS shore-based seafood processing plants in the state, through employment, secondary processing, and fishery product sales, contribute significantly to the economies of the Pacific Coast states; and

WHEREAS the ownership of shore-based seafood processing plants in the state is highly diversified and broadly based, ranging from state residents to multinational corporations; and

WHEREAS the people employed in the state's shore-based plants are a large, diverse group that includes residents of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, and many other states; and

WHEREAS the processing of seafood at shore-based plants is the foundation of the economies of the state's coastal communities; and

WHEREAS shore-based seafood processing plants support the local economies, hire local people, buy products from resident fishermen, provide a long-term source of tax revenue for state government, and provide a tax base for local government; and

WHEREAS shore-based seafood processing plants represent a long-term capital investment in the fishery resources of the North Pacific and are designed for the stable, continuous, and

sustained yield use of these resources; and

WHEREAS shore-based seafood processing plants have the capability for the full utilization of the harvested fish and the flexibility to engage in the manufacture of a wide variety of valuable products from the fish; and

WHEREAS the discarding and waste of a North Pacific fishery resource is unacceptable when it can be manufactured into valuable food products; and

WHEREAS the harvest of North Pacific fishery resource is more reliably and cost-effectively monitored when the product is delivered to shore-based processing plants, resulting in more accurate biological data on which to base resource management decisions; and

WHEREAS the factory-trawler and mother-ship fleet that operates in the Exclusive Economic Zone of the North Pacific is difficult to regulate because of the lack of adequate observer coverage; and

WHEREAS the factory-trawler and mother-ship fleet, without proper controls, cannot be accurately monitored to determine the actual quantity of fish caught, species composition, and actual amount of fish discarded; and

WHEREAS this lack of information could jeopardize the accuracy of the available data on the health of North Pacific fishery resources and could result in the sudden and unexpected depletion of the resources; and

WHEREAS the depletion of the resources would cause major economic dislocation in the state's coastal communities and in many communities in the other states and would jeopardize the investments made to date in Alaska's shore-based processing plants; and

WHEREAS the growth of the shore-based processing industry is constrained by limited land availability, lack of infrastructure, and the limited availability of marine resources close to the shore-based operations; and

WHEREAS the factory-trawler and mother-ship fleet does not experience these restraints on its growth and can exploit vast areas of the ocean that are not accessible to shore-based operations; and

WHEREAS the Americanization of the fisheries within the 200-mile limit has occurred so rapidly that most small coastal communities in Alaska have been unable either to enter these fisheries or to maximize their participation in them; and

WHEREAS the organization charged with overseeing and making recommendations for the conservation, management, allocation, and utilization of North Pacific fishery resources in the United States Exclusive Economic Zone is the North Pacific Fishery Management Council;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the North Pacific Fishery Management Council to approve a fishery management plan amendment that would grant

shore-based processors and small coastal communities a preference for the allocation of the harvestable fishery resources of the North Pacific; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the Secretary of the United States Department of Commerce to provide final approval for this amendment.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce; the Honorable John Knauss, Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the Honorable James W. Brennan, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Marine Fisheries Service; the Honorable Don W. Collinsworth, Chair of the 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.