

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1991

Source

SCS CSHJR 40(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.

50



Requesting a closure of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude to pelagic and on-bottom trawl fishing.

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

WHEREAS the Eastern Gulf of Alaska has been a significant hook and line fishing area for almost 100 years and most of the high value fisheries in the area are fully utilized by the hook and line fishing fleet; and

WHEREAS the intended level of trawl fishing effort in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska during 1991 is unprecedented and is expected to exert undue fishing pressure on fish stocks in the area and displace traditional hook and line fisheries; and

WHEREAS foreign trawl fishing in the Gulf of Alaska resulted in depressed populations of several species of rockfish; and

WHEREAS domestic trawl fishing now threatens these depressed stocks of rockfish; and

WHEREAS federal fishing regulations require that all fisheries that take a species of fish must be closed when the allowable biological catch for the species is reached; and

WHEREAS the trawl fishery in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska is rapidly approaching the allowable biological catch for roughey rockfish and shorttraker rockfish for 1991; and

WHEREAS all fisheries, including the longline sablefish fishery, that take roughey

rockfish and shortraker rockfish will be closed in order to prevent overfishing of these rockfish once the allowable biological catch is achieved and as a consequence the longline sablefish fishery may be canceled before it can open; and

WHEREAS the opening of the longline sablefish fishery was delayed until May 15, 1991, at the request of the International Pacific Halibut Commission, in order to reduce the bycatch of halibut; and

WHEREAS the domestic trawl fishery intends to fish in the same area and during the same time period that has been closed to the longline sablefish fishery to protect halibut; and

WHEREAS only by closing the Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude to trawl fishing will halibut receive the full protection, as intended by the delayed opening of the longline sablefish fishery season, necessary to reduce the bycatch of halibut; and

WHEREAS recent trawl fishing for rockfish in the Gulf of Alaska has resulted in a high bycatch of Alaska chinook salmon; and

WHEREAS the narrowness of the continental shelf and continental slope in the Eastern Gulf of Alaska concentrates trawl fishing effort in a small area and as a result prevents recovery of trawl fishing areas and may permanently impoverish the ecosystem of the Eastern Gulf of Alaska;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that United States Secretary of Commerce is respectfully requested to immediately implement emergency and permanent regulations closing the Eastern Gulf of Alaska East of 140 degrees West longitude to pelagic and on-bottom trawling.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Robert A. Mosbacher, Sr., Secretary of the U.S. Department of Commerce; the Honorable Steve Pennoyer, Alaska Regional Director, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Department of Commerce; 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.