

STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE

1999

Source  
CSHJR 26(WTR)

Legislative  
Resolve No.  
17



Relating to establishing maritime boundaries with Canada.

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

**WHEREAS** Alaska has extensive boundaries with Canada; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska has an abiding interest in promoting ongoing friendship with Canada in commerce, tourism, transportation, culture, resource utilization, and other matters; and

**WHEREAS** the concept of maritime boundaries between countries was established for the United States in 1976 for fishery zones and in 1983 for exclusive economic zones; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska has the potential to have coterminous maritime boundaries with the federal government at the northern coastal boundary in the Arctic Ocean, the seaward boundary with the Plover Islands in the Arctic Ocean, and the southern coastal boundary in the Pacific Ocean, including Dixon Entrance; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska has property rights to seabeds off the coast under the United States Submerged Lands Act of 1953; and

**WHEREAS** a maritime boundary agreement has not been established with Canada for these coastal boundaries or for the Pacific Ocean coastal boundary between Washington and Canada; and

**WHEREAS** the absence of maritime boundaries results in the unfortunate potential for disputes over fishing rights, mineral rights, transportation rights, commercial rights, and other rights of the parties involved due to the ongoing uncertainties; and

**WHEREAS** the federal government has for many years established maritime boundaries with other surrounding countries, including Mexico in 1976, Cuba in 1978, Venezuela in 1980, and Russia in 1990; and

**WHEREAS** the federal government has established a maritime boundary with Canada between Maine and Nova Scotia under a legal case decided by the International Court of Justice in 1984; and

**WHEREAS** active negotiations have not been announced by the federal government for establishing maritime boundaries with Canada for the coastal boundaries with Alaska or Washington; and

**WHEREAS**, in any negotiation of a maritime boundary with Canada that affects the sovereignty, territory, jurisdiction, or property of Alaska, representatives of Alaska must participate in the negotiations and Alaska must have the right to approve the provisions;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges

(1) the federal government to pursue discussions with the government of Canada for the purpose of establishing maritime boundaries with Alaska; and

(2) the federal government to include, in any negotiations over these maritime boundaries, representatives of Alaska on the negotiating team, and, for any agreement affecting the sovereignty, territory, jurisdiction, or property of Alaska, to recognize the right of Alaska to approve the provisions; and

(3) the federal government to ensure that, in order to pursue the public interest, provisions be made for public disclosure and hearings after the negotiating process and before ratification; and

(4) the Governor of Alaska and the Alaska delegation in Congress to pursue the sentiments of this resolution vigorously with the executive branch of the federal government.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; the Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, U.S. Secretary of State; the Honorable Jesse Helms, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable

Benjamin A. Gilman, Chair of the U.S. House Committee on International Relations; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Ranking Minority Member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable Sam Gejdenson, Ranking Minority Member of the U.S. House Committee on International Relations; 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.