

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10(FSH)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON FISHERIES

Offered: 2/27/12

Referred: Resources

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KERTTULA, Miller, Thompson

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting expanded research concerning the detrimental effects of ocean acidification.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** ocean waters and resources are vital to the economy, cultural identity,
4 and daily lives of many Alaskans; and

5 **WHEREAS** it is estimated that the seafood industry contributed a total of
6 \$5,800,000,000 to the state's economic output in 2007, including an estimated \$3,600,000,000
7 in wholesale value and \$2,200,000,000 in indirect and induced economic output; and

8 **WHEREAS** Alaska is home to eight of the 20 largest seafood ports in the United
9 States; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in 2007, Alaska seafood accounted for more than 62 percent, by volume,
11 of the commercial seafood harvested in the United States; and

12 **WHEREAS** the seafood industry employs more workers than any other industry in
13 the state; and

14 **WHEREAS** tourism is a major economic engine in the state, with a direct economic
15 contribution that exceeds \$1,600,000,000 annually and an induced effect that exceeds
16 \$2,000,000,000 annually; and

1 **WHEREAS** tourism is the state's third largest private sector employer, supplying
2 more than 26,000 full time equivalent jobs; and

3 **WHEREAS** recreational fishing, whale watching, and other ocean-related activities
4 constitute critical sectors of the state's tourism industry; and

5 **WHEREAS** coastal residents of the state depend on ocean resources for subsistence,
6 recreation, and other uses; and

7 **WHEREAS** tourism, fishing, subsistence, and recreation are supported by healthy
8 ocean ecosystems; and

9 **WHEREAS** the world's oceans have absorbed more than a quarter of the carbon
10 dioxide released into the atmosphere since the start of the Industrial Revolution; and

11 **WHEREAS** carbon dioxide absorbed by the oceans has altered ocean chemistry,
12 increasing the acidity of the ocean by 30 percent on average since the start of the Industrial
13 Revolution; and

14 **WHEREAS** the acidity of surface water could double by the end of this century if
15 current trends continue; and

16 **WHEREAS** the process of ocean acidification is accelerated in Arctic waters because
17 carbon dioxide is more soluble in cold water, and lower salinity diminishes the capacity of
18 oceans to buffer against acidification; there is evidence that ocean acidification is both more
19 severe and occurring more rapidly in the state's ocean waters than in tropical waters; and

20 **WHEREAS** the effects of ocean acidification could create conditions detrimental to
21 marine ecosystems in the state within decades; and

22 **WHEREAS** ocean acidification will affect the growth, reproduction, behavior,
23 disease resistance, and other biological and physiological processes of many marine
24 organisms; and

25 **WHEREAS** ocean acidification threatens carbonate-forming species, such as coral,
26 shellfish, and many species of marine plankton, and changes to those species may cause
27 significant detrimental effects throughout marine ecosystems and food webs, affecting the
28 largest marine organisms and many commercial fisheries; and

29 **WHEREAS** plankton, which form the base of the marine food web, King, Tanner,
30 and Dungeness crab, deep-sea coral gardens, and pteropods, which serve as important prey for
31 whales, salmon, and other marine life, are all at risk because of the effects of ocean

1 acidification; and

2 **WHEREAS** the North Pacific Fishery Management Council, in its 2007 Aleutian
3 Islands Fishery Ecosystem Plan, highlighted ocean acidification as both very likely to occur
4 and likely to cause significant ecological and economic effects; and

5 **WHEREAS**, because there is a scarcity of relevant data necessary for assessing the
6 potential effects of ocean acidification in the state, the North Pacific Fishery Management
7 Council has recommended ocean acidification be a research priority;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes that ocean
9 acidification is a threat to the state's marine ecosystems, tourism industry, and fisheries; and
10 be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the monitoring
12 and research that are necessary to study the effects of ocean acidification on the state's marine
13 ecosystem to determine potential effects on the state's economy and to assess opportunities to
14 address the effects of ocean acidification.

15 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
16 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
17 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Secretary
18 of State; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
19 Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa P. Jackson,
20 Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; Dr. Jane Lubchenco, Under
21 Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric
22 Administration Administrator; Samuel D. Rauch III, Acting Assistant Administrator for
23 Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Julia L. Gourley, U.S. Senior
24 Arctic Official, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, U.S. Department of State; the Honorable
25 Patrick K. Gamble, President, University of Alaska; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and
26 the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
27 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.