

STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2014

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**Legislative
Resolve No.**
34



Urging the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; requesting that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the Arctic Council; and supporting the strategic recommendation of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission.

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

WHEREAS, by its very existence, the state enables the United States to be an Arctic nation; and

WHEREAS, in April 2012, the Alaska State Legislature established the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission to "develop an Arctic policy for the state and produce a strategy for the implementation of an Arctic policy"; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission has been working with the National Strategy for the Arctic Region Task Force on how to best craft an Arctic policy that benefits and creates opportunity for the state and the entire United States; and

WHEREAS the Arctic resources of the state are immense and, with responsible

development, could contribute significantly to the economy of the United States and to the entire pan-Arctic region; and

WHEREAS the Bering Strait serves as the gateway to the Arctic for the marine traffic of the United States and other nations between the Pacific Ocean and the Arctic; and

WHEREAS the marine traffic through the Bering Strait choke point has been increasing; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Council is the intergovernmental forum in which all eight Arctic nations participate; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Council includes six Arctic indigenous communities, four of which are resident in the state, and six permanent working groups, each of which directly affects the state; and

WHEREAS Canada is the current chair of the Arctic Council, and the United States will be the chair from May 2015 until 2017; and

WHEREAS the United States should seek local and scientific expertise from the state to inform the nation's input at the Arctic Council; and

WHEREAS, in December 2012, the Governor proposed to the United States Department of State four priorities for consideration while the United States is chair of the Arctic Council; and

WHEREAS it is important for the priorities of the state and the United States to be in alignment while the United States holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council; and

WHEREAS, when the United States ascends to chair of the Arctic Council in 2015, the United States Department of State will appoint one individual as chair of the Arctic Council;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Department of State to consider the priorities of the state while it holds the position of chair of the Arctic Council, including the priorities of the Governor, creating jobs and economic opportunity for Arctic residents, preventing suicide, developing safe and sustainable sanitation facilities for small, isolated Arctic communities, and securing safe and reliable shipping; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the United States Department of State work in partnership with state officials to appoint a chair of the

Arctic Council; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports the strategic recommendation of the January 30, 2014, preliminary report of the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission to "continue to pursue, and actively expand, all avenues of participation in the Arctic Council, including involvement in working groups and by building partnerships with permanent participants."

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John F. Kerry, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable Robert Menendez, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; the Honorable Bob Corker, ranking member, U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Admiral Robert J. Papp, Jr., Commandant of the United States Coast Guard; the Honorable Sally Jewell, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Fran Ulmer, Chair, U.S. Arctic Research Commission; the Honorable Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph.D., Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator, U.S. Department of Commerce; the Honorable John Paul Holdren, Director, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; the Honorable Kerri-Ann Jones, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State; Alice Hill, Senior Counselor to the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.