

**STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE**

**2023**

**Source**  
CSHJR 5(FSH)

**Legislative  
Resolve No.**  
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Urging the United States Secretary of Commerce, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and other federal and state agencies to defend the state's fisheries, including the Southeast Alaska troll fishery.

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

**WHEREAS** commercial fishing is a mainstay of the state's economy and the largest private sector employer in the state; and

**WHEREAS**, in Southeast Alaska alone, the seafood industry directly employed 11,300 workers and provided \$653,000,000 in total economic output in 2019; and

**WHEREAS** the troll fleet is one of the largest fleets in the state and the largest fleet in Southeast Alaska, and, in 2019, approximately 1,450 fishers earned income directly from the fishery; and

**WHEREAS** state residents comprise 85 percent of the state's commercial troll permit holders, making it the highest level of local ownership of any major fishery in the state; and

**WHEREAS** commercial salmon trolling contributes to the economy of Southeast Alaska year-round, with winter, spring, and summer troll seasons sustaining employment in fishing, seafood processing, and fisheries-related industries; and

**WHEREAS**, when accounting for multiplier effects of the fishing, seafood processing, and fisheries-related industries, commercial trolling is one of the three most valuable commercial fisheries in Southeast Alaska and has a total annual economic impact of approximately \$85,000,000, as measured in terms of total output; and

**WHEREAS**, as compared to the costs of entry to other state fisheries, the affordability of the troll fishery provides an entry level opportunity for new commercial fishers, and, as a result, there are troll fishery permit holders in nearly all 33 communities in Southeast Alaska, all of which will suffer if the Southeast Alaska chinook troll fishery is closed; and

**WHEREAS** the Wild Fish Conservancy filed a lawsuit against the United States Secretary of Commerce and the National Marine Fisheries Service alleging that the Southeast Alaska chinook troll fishery authorized by the National Marine Fisheries Service is contributing to the extinction of an endangered population of southern resident killer whales; and

**WHEREAS** only two to three percent of the total Alaska catch is from the Puget Sound chinook salmon and lower Columbia River fall stocks, which constitute the most important stocks for southern resident killer whales, and the Alaska fishery catch is only a small portion of those stocks' runs; and

**WHEREAS** numerous studies have identified habitat loss and industrial activities in Puget Sound as factors negatively affecting southern resident killer whales; and

**WHEREAS**, while the population of southern resident killer whales has struggled, most of the northern and Alaska resident killer whale populations have at least doubled over the last 40 years; and

**WHEREAS** the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit has the potential to result in the closure of the Southeast Alaska troll fishery, despite the improbability of the closure resulting in meaningful benefits to southern resident killer whales; and

**WHEREAS**, if successful, the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit could affect other state fisheries by rescinding the state's delegated authority to manage and implement salmon fisheries in state water and in the exclusive economic zone off the shores of the state, requiring changes in the allocation of salmon under the Pacific Salmon Treaty and implementing new restrictions and closures in the state's fisheries;

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

Fisheries Service to find a way to hold the Southeast Alaska troll fishery harmless and prioritize preparation of the necessary documents and processes to support the continuation of the Southeast Alaska winter and summer troll fisheries while the National Marine Fisheries Service prepares a new biological opinion; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to commit the necessary resources to effectively defend the state's fisheries in present and future lawsuits, including the Wild Fish Conservancy lawsuit; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the state to work with the Alaska Congressional delegation to keep the Southeast Alaska troll fishery open should the court adopt the magistrate judge's recommendation that the troll fishery be closed.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Gina Raimondo, United States Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Richard W. Spinrad, Ph.D., United States Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator; Janet Coit, Assistant Administrator for Fisheries, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the Honorable Doug Vincent-Lang, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Fish and Game; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.