

STATE OF ALASKA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2013

Source
HR 7

House
Resolve No.
6



Requesting the United States Secretary of State to attend the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, on May 15, 2013, as the Arctic Minister of the United States.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

WHEREAS eight Arctic nations, including the United States and six indigenous organizations, four of which reside in Alaska, are currently represented on the Arctic Council; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Council serves as the premier intergovernmental forum on Arctic issues; and

WHEREAS the United States is an Arctic nation because of the presence of the state in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS Canada, which will assume the chair of the Arctic Council at the May 2013 ministerial meeting, has announced that, during Canada's term as chair, the council will focus on "development for the people of the North," with subthemes of responsible Arctic resource development, safe Arctic shipping, and sustainable circumpolar communities, and those areas of focus align with the interests and priorities of the state; and

WHEREAS the United States will assume the chair of the Arctic Council in

May 2015; and

WHEREAS the United States and Canada will cooperate closely during their respective terms as chair, and both will be working to increase cooperation among Arctic nations and engage the world in addressing the challenges and opportunities in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS the Twenty-Seventh Alaska State Legislature, in an effort to become more engaged in Arctic policy and work more closely with and have greater input into federal agency actions in the Arctic, in 2012, established the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission recognizes the importance of cross-border collaboration and the fundamental role the Arctic Council has in promoting that cooperation; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Arctic Policy Commission, the Governor of Alaska, and the Alaska State Legislature are highly motivated to ensure the state's interests in the Arctic are represented at national and international levels; and

WHEREAS former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton became the highest level American official to represent the United States at the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Nuuk, Greenland, in May 2011, signing, on behalf of the United States, the Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement, the first binding agreement negotiated under the auspices of the Arctic Council; and

WHEREAS, at the May 2013 Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, a second Arctic agreement, on cooperation on marine oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic, is expected to be signed by the Arctic Ministers; and

WHEREAS it is vital that the nation participate at the highest level at the Arctic Council and other Arctic forums to further the interests of the nation and the state in the Arctic; and

WHEREAS the position of the representative on the Arctic Council from the United States should be consistent with the other Arctic nations represented on the Arctic Council, and, in the case of a ministerial meeting, that representative is a Foreign Minister or Secretary of State;

BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives requests United States Secretary of State John Kerry to attend the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, on May 15, 2013, as the Arctic Minister of the nation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives requests that Secretary Kerry work with the state before the Arctic Council ministerial meeting to develop language for his remarks to the Arctic Council that reflects the interests of the state and that represents the level of cooperation that will best serve the state and the nation in the Arctic.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable John F. Kerry, United States Secretary of State; 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.