

STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2024

Source
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**Legislative
Resolve No.**
24



Affirming the commitment of the Alaska State Legislature to supporting small fishing-related businesses, families engaged in fishing, and the preservation of the state's cultural way of life; and calling on the United States Congress and all federal agencies to adopt policies and engage in certain efforts to improve the competitiveness and resiliency of the state's seafood industry.

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

WHEREAS small fishing-related businesses, often family-owned, are the backbone of the state's seafood industry and contribute significantly to the economy of the state; and

WHEREAS fishing is not merely an economic activity, but a way of life for many families in the state and deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the state; and

WHEREAS traditional knowledge and practices are passed down through fishing, ensuring that future generations may also benefit from the bounty of the sea, while preserving the state's unique cultural heritage; and

WHEREAS the sustainability of the state's fisheries relies on the continuation of this cultural tradition; and

WHEREAS efforts to improve global competitiveness of Alaska commercial seafood have benefits to the entire seafood industry, including harvesters, processors, and support businesses, as well as communities across the state and the state as a whole; and

WHEREAS Alaska seafood makes up more than 60 percent of seafood harvested in the United States and is a critical part of food production for the United States; and

WHEREAS Alaska seafood is exported to about 100 countries around the globe; and

WHEREAS Alaska seafood is subject to global market factors that directly affect its value, whether sold in the United States or exported; and

WHEREAS Alaska seafood currently faces extraordinary national and global challenges, including trade policies and nonreciprocal tariffs that favor other nations, large existing inventories, high costs and inflation rates, reduced consumer demand, and global competitors that have lower operating costs and are less regulated than domestic seafood producers; and

WHEREAS challenges that affect the economic viability of fishers and seafood processors also affect local economies and fish landing tax revenues in coastal communities across Alaska; and

WHEREAS, compared to other domestic sources of protein, seafood is not fully integrated into federal policies and programs designed to ensure domestic food security, supply chain integrity, and support for harvesting and processing businesses; and

WHEREAS the lack of recognition of domestic seafood in United States trade policy objectives and priorities results in market conditions that reduce the value of Alaska seafood and its accessibility to global markets, creating an unlevel playing field; and

WHEREAS the 2023 National Export Strategy issued by the federal Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee includes a chapter on seafood industries that highlights the need to improve interagency coordination and global market competitiveness for domestic seafood producers;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature affirms its commitment to supporting small fishing-related businesses, families engaged in fishing, and the preservation of the state's cultural way of life associated with fishing and recognizes how small fishing-related businesses, families engaged in fishing, and the cultural way of life associated with fishing contribute to the state's identity, the state's economy, and the sustainability of the

state's seafood industry; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports and encourages efforts by the federal government to create an office of seafood policy and program integration within the United States Department of Agriculture to help ensure that domestic food security and supply chain integrity is fully integrated into the department's policy strategies for domestic seafood; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Department of Agriculture to include seafood harvesting and processing businesses in all programs that support American food producers; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature encourages all federal agencies that affect the economic viability of the state's seafood industry to implement the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Seafood Strategy and chapter 9 of the Trade Promotion Coordinating Committee's 2023 National Export Strategy; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests all federal agencies and programs to increase purchases of Alaska seafood in a manner that is economically beneficial to small fishing-related businesses and that provides the highest quality of seafood for American families; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature calls on all federal agencies to help improve governmental programs applicable to the seafood industry for recapitalization, vessel construction, tax structures, workforce accessibility, energy, and infrastructure; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature calls on the United States Congress to increase federal funding for new product development, testing, promotion, and marketing of domestically produced seafood in a similar fashion as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Saltonstall-Kennedy Research and Development Program and its associated grant competition; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests the United States Secretary of Commerce to include and improve seafood expertise and leadership in the Office of the United States Trade Representative in order to better coordinate seafood trade objectives among offices of the United States Trade Representative, to coordinate seafood trade programs with seafood-related efforts of other federal agencies, and to provide a point of

entry for seafood producers to more effectively engage with the Office of the United States Trade Representative; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature calls on the federal government to improve United States trade policy through the Office of the United States Trade Representative and other federal agencies to create a more reciprocal tariff structure for seafood export and import and reduce the burden and risk associated with non-tariff barriers.

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 Mike Johnson, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Charles Schumer, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Tom Vilsack, United States Secretary of Agriculture; the Honorable Gina Raimondo, United States Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Katherine Tai, United States Trade Representative; the Honorable Richard Spinrad, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator, United States Department of Commerce; Barry Thom, Executive Director, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission; 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.