

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR MCGUIRE

Introduced: 2/3/14

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 Arctic Council; and be it

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

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