

STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

2011

Source

SCS CSHJR 15(STA)

Legislative Resolve No.

10



Relating to collaboration with the Yukon and the Northwest Territories through the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region and its Arctic Caucus to address common issues.

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

WHEREAS the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region was formed in 1991 as a forum for collaborative public and private sector planning among the states of Alaska, Montana, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, the Canadian provinces and territories of the Northwest Territories, Yukon, British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan, and the national capitals of Washington, D.C., and Ottawa, Canada; and

WHEREAS the Arctic Caucus of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region was formed in November 2009 as an informal group of legislators, government officials, business leaders, and leaders of nonprofit organizations committed to the responsible development of North America's Arctic regions; and

WHEREAS the purpose of the Arctic Caucus is to provide a forum within the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region for the Arctic jurisdictions of Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories to share information, discuss issues of mutual concern, and identify areas for collaboration, including working with other jurisdictions and providing Arctic-

related input to the working groups of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region; and

WHEREAS, on December 1 - 3, 2010, the Arctic Caucus met in Barrow, Alaska, to discuss the federal Arctic policies of the United States and Canada, the Arctic transportation and communication infrastructure needs of the Arctic Caucus member regions, and the priorities and action of the Arctic Caucus; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force attended the 2010 meeting of the Arctic Caucus in Barrow, and future cooperative action between the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force and the Arctic Caucus was outlined; and

WHEREAS the 21st Annual Summit of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region will be held July 19 - 22, 2011, in Portland, Oregon, and will provide a forum for continued Arctic Caucus collaboration; and

WHEREAS Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories, the three northern regions of the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, have problems in common, including limited educational opportunities; a minimal distance-delivery education infrastructure; a need for expanded workforce development programs; a need for better cold climate housing; a high rate of suicide; a high rate of domestic violence; a high rate of substance abuse; an economic reliance on resource-extraction industries and a corresponding need for economic diversification; remote and inaccessible communities that face high costs for fuel and commodities; and an urgent need for investment in transportation and communication infrastructure; and

WHEREAS there is much to be gained by Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories more closely sharing strategies to solve common problems and working together to solve those problems; and

WHEREAS some of the issues that the Arctic Caucus might address include increasing cooperation on scientific research and vessel tracking; exploring strategies to address and mitigate tension between local users and industry; identifying economic development opportunities through tourism, infrastructure development, and regional partnerships; supporting Arctic marine safety through appropriate jurisdictional licensing of marine pilots; exploring increased cooperation in emergency and disaster preparedness; and increasing coordination of search and rescue efforts;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature will collaborate with the

legislative assemblies of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories through the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region and its Arctic Caucus to facilitate communication and cooperation among the Arctic Caucus member regions and, as a result, to address more effectively problems common to those regions; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature will work with the legislative assemblies of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories through the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region and the Arctic Caucus to promote a synchronized message detailing the common needs of the Arctic Caucus member regions to their respective federal governments and emphasizing that coordinated United States and Canadian federal policies are vital to the welfare of Alaska, the Yukon, and the Northwest Territories; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature invites the governments of the Yukon and the Northwest Territories to join Alaska in an enduring alliance to pursue the common goals of their regions.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada; the Honourable John Morris Duncan, Canadian Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development; the Honourable Jim Kenyon, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Yukon; the Honourable Bob McLeod, Member of the Legislative Assembly of the Northwest Territories; the Honourable Denis Stevens, Consul General of the Consulate General of Canada in Seattle, Washington; the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable Robert M. Gates, United States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Sean Parnell, Governor of Alaska; the Honorable Mead Treadwell, Lieutenant Governor of Alaska; 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.