

**STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE**

2015

Source
CSSJR 13(RES)

**Legislative
Resolve No.**
26



Supporting oil and gas exploration and development on the outer continental shelf offshore of the state; opposing attempts to prohibit future oil and gas development in the Beaufort and the Chukchi Seas, including the Hanna Shoal area; and requesting that the federal Administration cease and desist from restrictions that adversely affect active or future leases in high petroleum potential areas in the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, including the Hanna Shoal area.

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

WHEREAS residents of the state, concerned with the economy of the state for this generation and generations to come, vehemently oppose the action taken by President Barack Obama on January 27, 2015, under the alleged authority of 43 U.S.C. 1341(a) (sec. 12(a) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act), to withdraw significant oil-rich portions of the Beaufort Sea Planning Area and the Chukchi Sea Planning Area from consideration for any future oil or gas leasing for purposes of exploration, development, or production; and

WHEREAS, while portions of the Beaufort Sea Planning Area and the Chukchi Sea

Planning Area were deferred in previous lease sales, the new plan would block new leases in high petroleum potential areas, including the Hanna Shoal area; and

WHEREAS the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, created on August 7, 1953, defined the outer continental shelf as the submerged land lying seaward of state coastal waters, which is three miles offshore, that is under United States jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, the United States Secretary of the Interior is responsible for the administration of mineral exploration and development of the outer continental shelf; and

WHEREAS, under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act, the United States Secretary of the Interior may grant leases to the highest qualified responsible bidder based on sealed competitive bids and adopt regulations as necessary to carry out the provisions of the Act; and

WHEREAS meeting national energy needs was a primary purpose of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 (P.L. 95-372); and

WHEREAS the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act Amendments of 1978 established criteria for the outer continental shelf leasing program and required the United States Secretary of the Interior to formulate an outer continental shelf leasing program that would "best meet national energy needs for the five-year period following its approval or reapproval"; and

WHEREAS the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, United States Department of the Interior, is responsible for managing oil and gas resources on the outer continental shelf and developing a five-year schedule of lease sales; and

WHEREAS the 2017-2022 Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Draft Proposed Program issued by the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management is the first in a series of three proposals in the staged development process of the program; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Region is the largest region of the outer continental shelf and covers over 1,035,000,000 acres, including offshore areas such as the Beaufort Sea, the Chukchi Sea, Cook Inlet, and the Gulf of Alaska; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Region of the outer continental shelf consists of 15 planning areas; and

WHEREAS sales have been held in eight of the planning areas over the years, the

most recent of which was held in 2008; and

WHEREAS there are existing federal leases in two planning areas, the Beaufort Sea and the Chukchi Sea, and both planning areas can be developed in an environmentally responsible manner; and

WHEREAS the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas are two outer continental shelf areas that have the potential to provide oil to extend the operation of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System for the benefit of all resident workers; and

WHEREAS, in public comments on the 2012-2017 program, the state and others stated that extending operations of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System is a priority; and

WHEREAS the Trans Alaska Pipeline System is currently operating at approximately one-quarter of its capacity, and the continued operations of the system depend on new discoveries; and

WHEREAS, in the Chukchi Sea Planning Area, Sale 193, the most recent sale in this area, was held in February 2008 and generated more than \$2,600,000,000 in revenue; and

WHEREAS there are 460 existing leases in the Chukchi Sea Planning Area, all issued in Sale 193; and

WHEREAS the 2012-2017 program scheduled one sale in the Chukchi Sea Planning Area for 2016; and

WHEREAS the Chukchi Sea Planning Area has the greatest potential to provide the hydrocarbons necessary to extend the operations of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System and provide the volumes of gas needed to make construction of a North Slope natural gas pipeline economically viable; and

WHEREAS the state continues to express its support of oil and gas activity on the outer continental shelf offshore of the state; and

WHEREAS the state has expressed a preference for more lease sales on an areawide basis, rather than by targeted leasing;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature continues to support oil and gas exploration and development on the outer continental shelf offshore of the state; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature vehemently opposes any attempt by the federal Administration to prohibit the future option for oil and gas development in oil-rich portions of the Beaufort Sea Planning Area and the Chukchi Sea

Planning Area, including the Hanna Shoal area; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the federal government cease and desist from restrictions that adversely affect active or future oil leases in oil-rich portions of the Beaufort and Chukchi Seas, including the Hanna Shoal area.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General of the United States; the Honorable Sally Jewell, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Hilary Tompkins, Solicitor, U.S. Department of the Interior; the Honorable Daniel M. Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Robert Dreher, Acting Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.