

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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ANWR Resolution Passes Legislature **HJR 7 Clears Senate as Bill Introduced in U.S. Senate**

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska State Legislature gave its final approval to a resolution calling on the U.S. Congress to allow oil exploration and development in the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

Sponsored by Reps. Beverly Masek (R-Willow) and Scott Ogan (R-Palmer), HJR 7 calls on the U.S. Congress to remove final barriers to development of what is considered the nation's best prospect for significant new petroleum discoveries.

“Alaskans have a proven record of environmentally sensitive oil and gas development at Prudhoe Bay, and this resolution expresses the state's support for extending this record east into ANWR,” said Masek, who co-chairs the House Resources Committee. “This will be good for Alaska, and good for America.”

ANWR was created in 1980, and the coastal plain set aside for study as a source of oil. The threat of presidential veto has effectively kept the region locked up for years, despite U.S. Geological Survey estimates that it could hold up to 16 billion barrels of oil, or 30 years' worth of imported Saudi Arabian oil.

President George W. Bush has voiced his support for opening ANWR as part of a push to lessen the country's dependence on imported energy, and on Monday, Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-Alaska) introduced an ANWR bill in the U.S. Senate.

“It is especially fitting that this resolution should pass just as Sen. Murkowski starts the final push in Congress to bring the benefits of oil exploration in ANWR to the nation,” said Ogan, chair of the House Special Committee on Oil and Gas. “Alaska's position on this issue is clear, and I'm glad to see the momentum building on this issue.”

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