



ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

RESOLUTION #2018-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE IN SUPPORT OF SB 92; AN ACT RELATING TO ABANDONED AND DERELICT VESSELS

WHEREAS, hundreds of derelict vessels currently litter Alaska's coastline and harbors and these numbers will increase every year unless action is taken to address aging fleets and changing commercial fisheries; and

WHEREAS, in the past two years alone, there have been numerous derelict vessel situations that have cost the state, municipalities, and the federal government, considerable expense, including two ex-Navy tugs in Adak, abandoned barges in Steamboat Slough near Bethel, and the tug Challenger that sunk off Juneau; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Municipal League recognizes the widespread costs and then environmental and navigational risks for both municipalities and the state, associated with derelict vessels; and

WHEREAS, neighboring states have dramatically strengthened their derelict vessel prevention laws in the past five years to better prevent, track and manage derelict vessels, including raising fees to support state management of derelict vessels and requiring vessel insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 1990, the Alaska Legislature passed a resolution acknowledging the need to better understand and address the existing and growing problem of derelict vessels around the state; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has outdated statutes regarding derelict vessels, which lack the ability to track vessel owners, agency enforcement authority, statewide coordination of response, funding and vessel insurance requirements; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, an ad-hoc Derelict Vessel Task Force was put into place and included representatives from state and federal agencies, municipal representatives, regional tribal representatives, federal and state legislative offices and private industry; and


WHEREAS, over nine full-day meetings, the task force developed thoughtful, robust and meaningful proposed changes that will help all stakeholders around the state, including harbor facilities, better address and prevent derelict vessels; and

WHEREAS, this will help our members protect harbor infrastructure, keep valuable moorage space available in our harbors and prevent unsustainable, economic, environmental and navigational hazards; and

WHEREAS, the proposed changes will improve communication and coordination between Alaska's harbors and state and federal agencies, directly leading to decreased cost associated with managing derelict vessels.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Municipal League fully supports the passage of SB 92 by the State Legislature.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Alaska Municipal League on this 17th day of November, 2017.

Signed: 
Pat Branson, President, Alaska Municipal League

Attest: 
Kathie Wasserman, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League