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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. _____

Recognizing the importance of the Arctic Council and reaffirming the
commitment of the United States to the Arctic Council.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. BERA submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the
Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of the Arctic Council and re-
affirming the commitment of the United States to the
Arctic Council.

Whereas the United States became an Arctic Nation upon the
purchase of Alaska in 1867;

Whereas the Arctic Council was established on September 19,
1996, through the Ottawa Declaration, to enhance co-
operation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic
states with the active involvement of Arctic Indigenous
peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic
issues;

Whereas the United States is a founding member of the Arctic Council and has twice served as Chair, from 1998 to 2000, and again from 2015 to 2017;

Whereas the Ottawa Declaration defines 8 states, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States, as Arctic states and members of the Arctic Council as they have sovereignty over territory in the Arctic region;

Whereas the Arctic region is undergoing unprecedented environmental, economic, and social changes due to the impacts of climate change and increased human activity;

Whereas the Council has an advanced understanding of Arctic challenges through scientific assessments, policy recommendations, and collaborative initiatives;

Whereas the engagement of Indigenous communities and respect for traditional knowledge are integral to the Arctic Council's success;

Whereas the Council is the leading intergovernmental initiative involving all Arctic states, raising global awareness of the Arctic's significance and influencing international climate policies;

Whereas the Arctic Council has addressed key issues such as persistent organic pollutants, oil spill prevention, search and rescue, and scientific collaboration;

Whereas the Arctic Council emphasizes sustainable development, environmental protection, and peace in the Arctic amidst growing competition over resources and shipping routes;

Whereas the Arctic Council has played a vital role in maintaining the Arctic as a region of low tension and its con-

tinued work is essential to ensuring a safe, secure, and stable Arctic for all;

Whereas the Arctic Council has made significant contributions to understanding Arctic biodiversity, ocean health, and sustainable resource management, while also addressing emerging threats such as microplastics and shipping pollution;

Whereas the United States has demonstrated leadership in Arctic affairs, notably through initiatives such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, which provided a groundbreaking understanding of climate change impacts, and the International Circumpolar Surveillance system, a region-wide disease surveillance system led by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

Whereas the United States has supported collaborative Arctic Council initiatives such as the Circumpolar Wildland Fire Initiative, developed under Norway's Chairship, in partnership with Gwich'in Council International;

Whereas Russia's illegal war of aggression in Ukraine has significantly impacted the operations of the Arctic Council, raising concerns over Russia's military modernization in the Arctic and reinforcing cooperative security ties among the 7 other Arctic states (A7);

Whereas, in response to Russia's invasion, the A7 states temporarily paused participation in all Arctic Council meetings;

Whereas the European Union suspended cooperation with Russia in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, leading to Russia's withdrawal in 2023;

Whereas, despite the suspension of cooperation with Russia, the Arctic Council and its working groups resumed activities in mid-2023;

Whereas, in February 2024, Russia suspended annual payments to the Arctic Council until its participation was reinstated;

Whereas, in February 2024, the eight Arctic states, in consultation with Indigenous Permanent Participant organizations, reached consensus to gradually resume official working group meetings;

Whereas Finland and Sweden's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization has heightened the Arctic's strategic importance for the alliance;

Whereas, in recent years, the United States has expanded its diplomatic presence in the Arctic region and strengthened economic and people-to-people ties with the region;

Whereas Russia's diplomatic isolation from the A7 states has led to increased cooperation with non-A7 countries, particularly China which poses a threat to American and European national security; and

Whereas a national intelligence estimate by the National Intelligence Council indicates that both Arctic and non-Arctic states will likely increase their competitive activities and military presence in the region as warming temperatures make the Arctic more accessible and states seek to protect their investments: Now, therefore, be it

- 1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—
- 2 (1) recognizes the key role the Arctic Council
- 3 has played as a critical forum for fostering inter-

1 national cooperation, sustainable development, and
2 environmental protection in the Arctic region;

3 (2) commends the Arctic Council for its
4 achievements in promoting scientific research, policy
5 coordination, and Indigenous participation to ad-
6 dress regional challenges;

7 (3) affirms the United States commitment to
8 active participation and leadership within the Arctic
9 Council to advance shared goals and uphold the val-
10 ues of cooperation and respect among Arctic nations
11 and Indigenous peoples;

12 (4) acknowledges the Arctic Council's 8 member
13 states—Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Nor-
14 way, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the
15 United States—as key participants in the Arctic
16 Council due to their sovereignty over territories in
17 the Arctic Region, which enables them to engage in
18 collaborative efforts to address Arctic issues;

19 (5) encourages increased collaboration among
20 Arctic Council member states, Permanent Partici-
21 pants, and Observers to address emerging challenges
22 and opportunities in the Arctic, including the im-
23 pacts of climate change and sustainable economic
24 development;

1 (6) supports robust funding and resources for
2 United States agencies and organizations engaged in
3 Arctic Council activities to ensure the United States
4 fulfills its responsibilities as an Arctic Nation;

5 (7) calls upon the Arctic Council to continue
6 prioritizing peace, security, and environmental stew-
7 ardship in the Arctic to safeguard the region for fu-
8 ture generations;

9 (8) urges the executive branch to uphold and
10 promote the principles and objectives of the Arctic
11 Council in its Arctic policy and diplomacy efforts;

12 (9) emphasizes the importance of increased
13 United States attention and resources in the Arctic
14 as geopolitical competition and human activities in
15 the region intensify; and

16 (10) emphasizes the importance of the position
17 of United States Arctic Ambassador-at-Large to pro-
18 vide strong and consistent United States leadership
19 in Arctic diplomacy and engagement and urges the
20 executive branch to take all necessary steps to pre-
21 vent prolonged vacancies in this critical role.