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Contact: Rep. Dan Ogg

Juneau Office: 465-2487

Juneau Fax: 465-4956

### REP. OGG DRAFTS RESOLUTION SUPPORTING SEA OTTER RESEARCH

Resolution Requests \$25 million for Kodiak-Centered Research Efforts

(JUNEAU) – Rep. Ogg is seeking to make Kodiak a leader in research investigating the decline in abundance of Northern sea otters in Western Alaska.

“I am working with the House Resources Committee to introduce legislation that asks Congress to provide \$5 million per year for five years for research into the causes of the dramatic decline in sea otters,” Rep. Ogg said. “The resolution asks that the research be centered in Kodiak with field stations in other parts of Western Alaska that may be affected by the population decline.”

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed listing the Southwest Alaska population of sea otters as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. Sea otters in the region have declined as much as 65 percent since the mid-1970s.

“As we have witnessed with Steller sea lions, commercial fishing activity could be curtailed if sea otters are protected under the Endangered Species Act,” Rep. Ogg said. “We should be proactive in our efforts to investigate the cause of the decline before that happens.”

The resolution requests funding for five years so that long-term studies can be conducted assessing the changes in population and to determine the extent of variability in sea otter population levels. Previous studies and surveys have been sporadic and have not produced reliable data over a significant period of time.