

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR EGAN

Introduced:
Referred:

A RESOLUTION

1 **Creating the Taku River Task Force as a joint legislative task force.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Taku River is Southeast Alaska's largest overall salmon producer,
4 with the region's largest run of coho and chinook salmon and significant runs of sockeye,
5 chum, and pink salmon, and eulachon; and

6 **WHEREAS** the state tide and submerged land of the Taku River are crucial to the
7 spawning, incubation, and rearing of all five species of wild Pacific salmon, trout, and char;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** private recreational property in the Taku River valley represents a
10 valued cultural element of the area; and

11 **WHEREAS** existing property rights, uses, and access must be protected in all future
12 plans for the Taku River area; and

13 **WHEREAS** data from the Department of Fish and Game indicates that 40 to 50
14 percent of juvenile salmon in the Taku River watershed are reared below the confluence of the
15 Tulsequah River, with the majority of juvenile king salmon rearing occurring in the main
16 channel of the lower Taku River; and

1 **WHEREAS** personal use and sport hunting, fishing, and trapping, and the use of
2 recreational personal watercraft and vehicles and aircraft constitute longstanding uses of the
3 Taku River valley; and

4 **WHEREAS** those uses should be protected and secured for future generations; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Alaska portion of the Taku River supports significant personal use,
6 commercial, and sport fisheries, generating over 400 fishing-related jobs, an estimated
7 \$8,000,000 of annual income from commercial and recreational fishing activity, and more
8 than \$25,000,000 from all activities associated with those fisheries; and

9 **WHEREAS** established businesses use the Taku River to provide supplies to
10 recreational property owners and engage in tourism and sport fishing enterprises on the Taku
11 River; and

12 **WHEREAS** past proposals to use the Taku River as an industrial transportation
13 corridor involving conventional tug and barge systems or unconventional barges and large
14 wheeled or tracked vehicles introduced significant risk of damage to the river bottom not
15 generated by existing uses of the river's resources; and

16 **WHEREAS** industrial transportation systems pose significant risks to important fish
17 spawning, incubation, and rearing habitats, could degrade water quality, and may disrupt the
18 ice cover, all of which would be detrimental to the habitat; and

19 **WHEREAS** user groups such as private recreational property owners, commercial,
20 charter, sport and personal use fishermen, seafood processors, and other local businesses have
21 expressed significant concerns over recent proposals to permit industrial transportation
22 systems on the Taku River;

23 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Taku River Task Force is created as a joint task force of
24 the Alaska State Legislature; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be composed of eight members, as
26 follows:

- 27 (1) the senator from Senate District B;
- 28 (2) the representatives from House District 3 and House District 4;
- 29 (3) the commissioner of fish and game or the commissioner's designee;
- 30 (4) four members of the public, appointed jointly by the President of the
- 31 Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives as follows:

1 (A) one owner of private recreational property in the Taku River
2 valley;

3 (B) one holder of a commercial fishing permit for registration area A;

4 (C) one owner or employee of a business that derives significant
5 income from transportation to or within the Taku River;

6 (D) one person who uses but does not consume Taku River resources;
7 and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
9 House of Representatives shall jointly appoint the chair and vice-chair of the task force; and
10 be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall seek the professional opinions of
12 research and management personnel from the Department of Fish and Game and the
13 Department of Natural Resources in carrying out its duties; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force shall be to

15 (1) review biological data on Taku River fish and game resources;

16 (2) work cooperatively with appropriate federal, state, and local government
17 agencies to ensure monitoring of industrial vessel traffic on the Taku River;

18 (3) determine how best to protect the Taku's unique resources and maintain
19 the general productivity of Taku River habitat while providing for recreational and other uses;

20 (4) recommend public policy options to ensure the proper protection of Taku
21 River resources; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that Taku River Task Force meetings shall be open to the
23 public; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall submit a report of its findings to the
25 legislature not later than December 1, 2011; and be it

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force shall be terminated on January 31, 2012.