

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS MCGUIRE, Gardner, Ellis

Introduced: 1/30/13
Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

Supporting the continued and increased exploration, extraction, processing, and production of rare earth elements in the state; and urging the United States Congress to support efforts of the state to develop rare earth elements in the state for the benefit of the economic and national security of the United States.

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

WHEREAS rare earth elements, those elements consisting of lanthanum through lutetium on the periodic table, plus scandium and yttrium, possess unique chemical, electrical, and physical properties that make them indispensable for a wide variety of emerging critical technologies needed for defense, clean energy, and other consumer and industrial uses; and

WHEREAS dysprosium and terbium are among the scarcest, most valuable, and most sought-after rare earth metals needed for green technology and military applications; and

WHEREAS, in the past, the United States was largely self-sufficient in rare earth elements but today has become almost entirely dependent on foreign sources of yttrium, niobium, tantalum, zirconium, and other rare earth elements; and

WHEREAS the value-added technology and skill to allow both the recovery of rare

1 earth elements from mineral forms in ore and the manufacture of finished products, including
2 powerful magnets, from rare earth elements has almost entirely migrated to China along with
3 the actual mining of rare earth element ores; and

4 **WHEREAS** China currently produces 95 percent of the world's rare earth elements
5 but reduced the export of rare earth elements by 54 percent from 2005 to 2010 and by nearly
6 50 percent from 2010 to 2011; and

7 **WHEREAS** a future in which manufacturing of high-tech military equipment takes
8 place only outside of the United States poses a risk to national security, and the manufacturing
9 of wind turbines, solar panels, advanced batteries, and geothermal steam turbines produced
10 only outside of the United States poses a risk to energy security; and

11 **WHEREAS** the development and expansion of extraction, processing, refining, and
12 production are needed to provide the United States with self-reliance in technologies that
13 depend on rare earth elements; and

14 **WHEREAS** mineral resources make up a major portion of the state's economic assets,
15 and the deposits discovered at Bokan Mountain on the southern end of Prince of Wales Island
16 are rich in the heavy rare earth elements of europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium,
17 thulium, holmium, erbium, ytterbium, lutetium, and yttrium; and

18 **WHEREAS** the Bokan Mountain deposits are the only known deposits in the world
19 that have deep water access, accessible labor, and prospective power sources; and

20 **WHEREAS** overland access and the requirements for transporting rare earth elements
21 extracted in the Tongass National Forest are mitigated by immediate access to the mining
22 property by ocean transport; and

23 **WHEREAS** the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
24 designates the Bokan Mountain area for mineral development, and the state's Prince of Wales
25 Island Area Plan classifies the Kendrick Bay area for mineral and forestry access and
26 development; and

27 **WHEREAS** economic opportunities on Prince of Wales Island and throughout the
28 state have significantly decreased; and

29 **WHEREAS** increased exploration for rare earth elements along with the
30 establishment of secondary processing and research facilities related to rare earth elements in
31 the state will create new career opportunities for Alaskans; and

1 **WHEREAS** development of rare earth element deposits in the state is critical to the
 2 economic and military security of the state and the nation;

3 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the continued and
 4 increased exploration, extraction, processing, and production of rare earth elements in the
 5 state; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges state agencies that
 7 administer permits required for the development of the rare earth elements in the state to
 8 expedite consideration and issuance of permits required for the development of rare earth
 9 element deposits in the state; and be it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the governor and the
 11 director of the division of geological and geophysical surveys in the Department of Natural
 12 Resources to work closely with the United States Geological Survey, the United States
 13 Department of Commerce, and the United States Department of Defense to explore for and
 14 identify deposits of rare earth elements in the state, develop an information database on rare
 15 earth elements in the state, and promote the development of the rare earth elements extraction,
 16 processing, and production industry in the state; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
 18 Congress to support the efforts of the state to develop rare earth elements in the state for the
 19 benefit of the economic and national security of the United States.

20 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
 21 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
 22 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the
 23 Interior; the Honorable Leon E. Panetta, United States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable
 24 John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi,
 25 Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Harry Reid, Majority
 26 Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S.
 27 Senate; the Honorable Ron Wyden, Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of
 28 the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S.
 29 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
 30 delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 113th United States Congress.