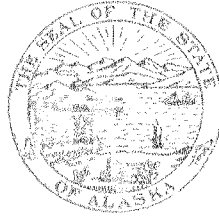


# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL

## **Sponsor Statement SJR 15 Opposing International Designations**

Senate Joint Resolution 15 urges the federal government to cease pursuing the creation of the Beringia International Park. This Bering Strait-region transboundary park proposal is currently progressing via a Memorandum of Understanding written by representatives of the Russian government and our then United States Secretary of State Hilary Clinton, present Secretary of State John Kerry and the National Park Service.

This park designation, spanning from eastern Russia over to northwestern Alaska attempts to bond Russian and northwestern Alaska cultures together, recognizing their subsistence lifestyles and historic geographic, archaeological and cultural ties.

While this MOU has yet to be signed by the President of the United States, the planning and execution has been advancing over the years, quietly, without any efforts to coordinate or consult the citizens of the state of Alaska or its government regarding possible impacts on fish and game resources, oil and gas development or mining opportunities in those proposed regions.

Alaska's United States Senator Lisa Murkowski, as well as Governor Sean Parnell have both outlined their concerns regarding this designation to no avail or consideration; consequently the plan continues to move forward without regard to or input from Congress or the state of Alaska.

It is undeniable that there exists a geographical, cultural and sociological bond that spans eastern Russian and Alaska's western coast; however, designating more Alaska land as an international park to recognize that commonality is not necessary or welcomed by the state as it creates yet another layer of federal bureaucracy and regulation.

SJR 15 strongly urges that the federal government pause this process, consult the State of Alaska for this park designation and any further federal or United Nations designations in the future and that their creation require both the approval of the United States Congress and the Alaska State Legislature.

Please join me in opposition to the creation of the Beringia Transboundary International Park.