

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Interim:

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**Session:**

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REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER DISTRICT 7

SPONSOR STATEMENT HB 244

“An Act extending the termination date of the Citizens’ Advisory Commission on Federal Management Areas in Alaska; and providing for an effective date.”

House Bill (HB) 244 extends the Citizens Advisory Commission on Federal Areas’ (CACFA) sunset date from June 30, 2014 to June 30, 2021.

CACFA was first established a year after the passage of the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA). Sunset in 1999 and later reconstituted in 2007, CACFA has ably continued to perform its mission in helping Alaskans navigate ANILCA’s complex management rules and regulations and serving as a vigilant and forceful advocate for protecting Alaskans’ rightful access to federal lands and the natural resources held therein.

CACFA has reviewed, sought citizen comment, and submitted written testimony on federal management plans ranging from the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve, the Cook Inlet Beluga Whales, the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex, and the proposed Southeast Alaska Native Land Entitlement Finalization and Jobs Protection Act.

CACFA has also significantly advanced the debate in seeking solutions to the increasingly contentious relationship between federal agencies and the State of Alaska regarding national land and resource management policies in Alaska: particularly relating to the promises made in ANILCA. In August 2013, CACFA hosted a two-day summit that brought together a diverse body of experts on Alaska federal land management issues to propose solutions towards improving the state-federal relationship and thereby enhance the ability of Alaskans to freely access and enjoy Alaska’s lands and resources. The summit was not a standalone event. CACFA has advanced the Summit’s work by conducting additional public meetings on federal overreach to develop a comprehensive list of policy recommendations.

With federal land management policies increasingly at odds with Alaska’s desire to access and sustainably develop its resources, CACFA is an essential tool in ensuring Alaskans have a strong and consistent voice. I urge you to join me in allowing CACFA to continue its important mission by passing HB 244.

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