

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 54

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES WILLIAMS, Phillips, Green, Mulder

SENATORS Halford, Pearce, Taylor, Green, Miller, Mackie, Leman, Parnell, Pete Kelly, Ward

Introduced: 2/9/00

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

**1 Relating to urging the exclusion of national forests in Alaska from President
2 Clinton's proposal for withdrawal of roadless areas in the national forest system.**

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

4 WHEREAS the forest products industry has been and continues to be an important
**5 economic sector in Alaska that contributes significant employment income to the economy of
6 the state, and, through purchases of timber from National Forest System lands, contributes
7 significant revenue to local communities through the 25 percent revenue sharing provisions
8 of federal law; and**

9 WHEREAS application of President Clinton's proposed roadless policy to the Tongass
**10 and Chugach National Forests would designate significant additional acreage as administrative,
11 de facto wilderness areas within Alaska; and**

12 WHEREAS application of the President's proposed roadless policy in Alaska would
**13 be contrary to sec. 708(b)(4), Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA),
14 which specifically prohibits another roadless area review and evaluation (RARE) on national
15 forest lands in Alaska for the purpose of setting aside commercial forest land as wilderness;
16 and**

1 **WHEREAS** application of the President's proposed roadless policy in Alaska would
2 be contrary to sec. 1326(a) of ANILCA, which prohibits the withdrawal of more than 5,000
3 acres, in the aggregate, of public lands within Alaska without the consent of the Congress; and

4 **WHEREAS** application of the President's proposed roadless policy in Alaska would
5 be contrary to sec. 1326(b) of ANILCA, which expressly prohibits studies of public lands for
6 the purpose of considering the establishment of new conservation system units, recreation
7 areas, national conservation areas, or for related or similar purposes; and

8 **WHEREAS** the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990 and other Congressional and
9 administrative actions have withdrawn more than 90 percent of the Tongass National Forest
10 from availability for timber harvest and other resource development opportunities; and

11 **WHEREAS** the 1997 and 1999 revisions of the Tongass Land Management Plan
12 (TLMP) further reduced the available commercial forest lands in the Tongass to 576,000 acres
13 out of nearly 6,000,000 suitable acres across the forest; and

14 **WHEREAS** the available commercial forest lands remaining after the 1999 TLMP
15 amendments are insufficient to satisfy the raw material needs of Southeast Alaska's forest
16 products manufacturing industry given, the plan's maximum annual economic offering level
17 of 153,000,000 board feet; and

18 **WHEREAS**, should the President's roadless policy be applied to the Tongass, it would
19 further reduce the available commercial forest lands in the Tongass to less than half the
20 currently available acreage and could reduce the maximum annual offering level to as low as
21 30,000,000 board feet; and

22 **WHEREAS** application of the President's proposed roadless policy to the Tongass,
23 together with Under Secretary Lyons' 1999 unilateral TLMP amendment, would nullify the
24 results of the United States Forest Service's 1986-1997 planning process in the Tongass, which
25 cost the taxpayers more than \$13,000,000; and

26 **WHEREAS** application of the President's proposed roadless policy to the Tongass,
27 together with Under Secretary Lyons' 1999 unilateral TLMP amendment, would further
28 destabilize the already unstable timber-based economy of Southeast Alaska by forcing the
29 closure of most of the remaining forest products manufacturing facilities, resulting in loss of
30 employment and associated negative socioeconomic impacts within timber-dependent
31 communities and the Southeast Alaska region; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Chugach National Forest has spent three years and several million
2 dollars conducting a revision to its land management plan and is within a few months of
3 issuing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for that plan; and

4 **WHEREAS** a wide range of interests from the Alaska public has been involved in the
5 Chugach land management planning process, working to develop a range of plan alternatives
6 that respond to the public's interests, needs, and concerns, and the President's roadless policy
7 would render that involvement and expense pointless and undermine public confidence in the
8 planning process; and

9 **WHEREAS** the public, through the Chugach Land Management Plan revision scoping
10 process, has expressed deep concern that the approximately 130,000 acres of the Chugach
11 National Forest suffering from spruce bark beetle damage must be managed for the restoration
12 of a green, healthy forest, and the application of the President's roadless policy will prevent
13 the access required by land managers to accomplish that restoration work; and

14 **WHEREAS** application of the President's roadless policy will render it virtually
15 impossible for inholders and adjacent landowners, particularly families and small business
16 owners, to obtain the access to their property that was promised them in ANILCA;

17 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature opposes any application of
18 President Clinton's proposed roadless policy to national forests in Alaska and urges the
19 President to obey the requirements of ANILCA and to respect the National Forest
20 Management Act planning process by refraining from including the Tongass and Chugach
21 National Forests in the proposed policy; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the efforts of
23 Governor Tony Knowles, U.S. Senator Ted Stevens, U.S. Senator Frank Murkowski, and U.S.
24 Congressman Don Young in opposing the application to Alaska of the President's proposed
25 roadless policy and urges them to maintain their objections and to continue to press for the
26 exclusion of Alaska's forests; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to
28 determine what legal action may be available under ANILCA to enjoin the application of the
29 roadless policy to Alaska and to file the proper legal action when this issue becomes ripe if
30 the President elects to apply the policy to Alaska.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the

1 United States; the Honorable Dan Glickman, United States Secretary of Agriculture; Mike
2 Dombeck, Chief of the United States Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture;
3 and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and
4 the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in
5 Congress.