

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

2007

Source
CSHJR 21(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.
18



Opposing the designation of any area in the state as a world heritage site, biosphere reserve, or any other type of international designation without the consent of the Alaska State Legislature and affected local governments; and urging the United States Congress to enact legislation to require congressional approval before an area in the United States may be considered for an international designation.

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has designated over 60 sites in the United States as "world heritage sites" or "biosphere reserves," which altogether are equal in size to the State of Colorado, the eighth largest state; and

WHEREAS art. IV, sec. 3, United States Constitution, provides that the United States Congress shall make all needed rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property belonging to the United States and nothing in the constitution shall be construed to prejudice any claims of the United States or of any state; and

WHEREAS many of the United Nations' designations include private property inholdings and contemplate buffer zones of adjacent land; and

WHEREAS some international land designations, such as those under the United States Biosphere Reserve Program and the Man and Biosphere Program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, operate under independent national committees such as the United States Man and Biosphere National Committee that have no legislative directives or authorization from the United States Congress; and

WHEREAS local citizens and public officials concerned about job creation and resource-based economies usually have no say in the designation of land near their homes for inclusion in an international land use program; and

WHEREAS these international designations are an open invitation to the international community to interfere in domestic economies and land use decisions; and

WHEREAS environmental groups and the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, have been working to establish an international park, a world heritage site, and a marine biosphere reserve called Beringia covering parts of western Alaska, eastern Russia, and the Bering Sea, and in Glacier Bay National Park; and

WHEREAS foreign companies and countries could use these international designations in western Alaska to block or inhibit economic development that they perceive as competition; and

WHEREAS animal rights activists could use these international designations to generate pressure to harass or block harvesting of marine mammals by Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS international designations may be used to harass or block industrial development in the state, including projects related to fishing, mining, timber harvesting, railroads, power transmission lines, pipelines, and other oil and gas development; and

WHEREAS the subsistence and recreational use of fish and game resources in the state could be severely and negatively affected by international land use designations; and

WHEREAS the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, with the collaboration of the United States Department of the Interior, has recognized the Kluane/Wrangell-St. Elias/Glacier Bay/Tatshenshini-Alsek World Heritage Site in Alaska, and has listed the Aleutian Islands Unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Krusenstern Archaeological District, Denali National Park, Gates of the Arctic National Park, and Katmai National Park on the Tentative List of areas nominated for full status; and

WHEREAS the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's Man and the Biosphere Programme has identified the Glacier Bay - Admiralty Island, Noatak, Denali, and Aleutian Islands Biosphere Reserves in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, under current law, the United States Secretary of the Interior can nominate world heritage sites, and the United States Secretary of State can nominate biosphere reserves, both without approval by the Congress;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes and reaffirms the constitutional authority of the United States Congress as the elected representatives of the people over the federally owned land of the United States; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature objects to the nomination or designation of any site in Alaska as a world heritage site, biosphere reserve, or any other type of international designation without the prior consent of the Alaska State Legislature and affected local governments; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation that will require approval by an Act of Congress before any area in the United States or its territories can be studied as a potential, or nominated to be a, world heritage site, biosphere reserve, or any other type of international designation.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Condoleezza Rice, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all members of the 110th United States Congress by electronic transmission.