

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Concurrent Resolution 4

“Urging the Governor to establish the Office of Outdoor Equity”

Sponsor Statement

House Concurrent Resolution 4 reflects a nationwide desire to establish specific government initiatives to ensure that our public outdoor recreation areas are accessible, affordable, and safe for all Alaskans regardless of their backgrounds or income levels. However, despite an increasingly diverse population, minorities are still underrepresented in national forest visitation statistics. Research shows that this is not due to an inherent disinterest in the outdoors, but rather disparities in factors such as information distribution, perception of safety, and affordability.

Alaska, as a state that prides itself on its world-class outdoor recreation activities, should formally examine disparities in its outdoor outreach efforts by creating a statewide office to make accessibility to our parks, trails, ski slopes, cabins, and waters more equitable.

Additionally, the lands now known as the state of Alaska have had Indigenous placenames that were given to them by Native peoples who have stewarded them since time immemorial. The state also needs to make a formal effort to collaborate with Native communities in order to honor the desires of advocates who wish to reinstate these placenames.

House Concurrent Resolution 4 would urge the governor to create an office under the Department of Natural Resources called the Office of Outdoor Equity that would address these aforementioned issues – primarily through distributing grant funds that would improve outdoor equity. All Alaskans deserve to equitable access to our unparalleled outdoor recreation areas – and the Office of Outdoor Equity would be a major first step towards achieving this goal.

I respectfully ask for your support in the passage of HCR 4.