

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR TAYLOR

Introduced: 2/20/97

Referred: Judiciary

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to challenging the environmental and economic integrity of Alaska timber**
2 **as Christmas decor for the United States Capitol.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the Tongass National Forest has been chosen by the Clinton
5 Administration to provide Christmas trees to decorate the nation's Capitol and congressional
6 offices; and

7 **WHEREAS** the grace and beauty of Alaska's native tree species are well suited for
8 such a distinct purpose; and

9 **WHEREAS** Alaskans are a generous people, and their State's resources a tremendous
10 asset that if carefully managed by the people most closely affected can be the backbone of a
11 strong economy; and

12 **WHEREAS** trees harvested for the economic benefit of the people of the Tongass are
13 subject to full public comment and environmental review; and

14 **WHEREAS**, under normal conditions, the Alaska Legislature would regard the
15 opportunity to provide federal offices with Christmas trees from our national forest as the
16 highest compliment and honor; and

1 **WHEREAS** conditions are not normal, as one of Alaska's two pulp mills and the
2 state's largest sawmill have shut down while Alaska's remaining pulp mill has announced it
3 will close in March at a cost of thousands of jobs; and

4 **WHEREAS** the lack of a reliable timber supply threatens the two largest sawmills left
5 in the Tongass National Forest and could add hundreds more timber jobs to those which have
6 vanished in the last four years; and

7 **WHEREAS** the Clinton Administration has ignored the efforts of the Alaska
8 congressional delegation and the Alaska State Legislature to secure the livelihoods of the
9 workers, their families, and the timber dependent communities of Southeast Alaska; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature deems it inappropriate to harvest trees for
11 decorative purposes, and ask Southeast Alaskans to incur the cost, while Southeast Alaska
12 timber jobs are being extinguished, depressing the area's economy; and

13 **WHEREAS** what should be an honor is instead an affront as it carries the message
14 that careful harvesting of our trees is acceptable to decorate the nation's Capitol and the halls
15 of Congress, yet not acceptable to provide jobs for the people of Southeast Alaska;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes harvesting of
17 Alaska's trees to provide pleasure for those far removed is symbolic of a failed national policy
18 which has cost Southeast Alaska communities thousands of year-round, family supporting jobs
19 and caused untold personal suffering; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Legislature opposes the harvesting of
21 Christmas trees for the nation's Capitol and other federal and congressional offices from the
22 Tongass National Forest and urges that it not be done without full public comment and a
23 comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests the Clinton
25 Administration to find another source for the 1998 White House Christmas tree festivities in
26 light of the social and economic hardship forced upon the unemployed timber workers, their
27 families, and the timber dependent-communities of the Tongass.

28 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the
29 United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice President of the United States and President
30 of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Strom Thurmond, President Pro Tempore of the U.S.
31 Senate; the Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Thomas

1 Daschle, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the
2 U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Dick Armey, Majority Leader of the U.S. House
3 of Representatives; the Honorable Richard A. Gephardt, Minority Leader of the U.S. House
4 of Representatives; Secretary Dan Glickman, Department of Agriculture; Michael Dombeck,
5 Chief of the U.S. Forest Service; Philip Janik, Regional Forester, Region X, U.S. Forest
6 Service; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.
7 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
8 delegation in Congress.