

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/13/99

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS TAYLOR, Ward

A RESOLUTION

1 Relating to the removal of beaver from Washington, D.C.

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

3 WHEREAS the National Park Service is attempting to trap and remove at least two
4 beavers from the vicinity of the Potomac Tidal Basin near the national Mall in Washington,
5 D.C., because the beavers have downed four cherry trees and five white cedar trees; and

6 WHEREAS the natural wild and free roaming beaver were trapped to extinction in
7 Washington, D.C., and the Potomac Tidal Basin beaver are only retaking habitat that the
8 species has occupied forever and in which man is the trespasser; and

9 WHEREAS the return of beaver to Washington, D.C., will enhance the biological
10 diversity of the nation's capital and the integrity of its residents, as cherry tree eating beavers
11 cannot tell a lie; and

12 WHEREAS the unrestrained development of government buildings, highways, and
13 urban sprawl in Washington, D.C. has destroyed beaver habitat, and immediate steps should
14 be taken to halt all major construction projects; and

15 WHEREAS human activity in or around the Potomac Tidal Basin will undoubtedly
16 have adverse effects on the new beaver colony; and

17 WHEREAS Washington, D.C., and the nation as a whole would benefit from greater

1 efforts on the part of the National Park Service to assist and protect wildlife by excluding
2 people from areas where wildlife is attempting to reestablish a foothold on its natural range
3 in the nation's capital; and

4 **WHEREAS** federal law requires that the Potomac Tidal Basin is now, because of the
5 beavers' pioneering effort, a critical habitat area; and

6 **WHEREAS** critical habitat areas are uniquely rare, and, without immediate
7 enforcement of federal laws, this unique subspecies of Potomac Tidal Basin beaver will again
8 become extinct; and

9 **WHEREAS** we have no information or good science about the habitat of the "Potomac
10 Tidal Basin beaver," and a task force of scientists should immediately be impaneled and all
11 human activity in the tidal basin area halted until a thorough and complete analysis has been
12 completed; and

13 **WHEREAS** the National Academy of Sciences has been studying predator control in
14 Alaska for five years, and the National Park Service has labeled these beaver as very evasive
15 and wily "tree predators"; and

16 **WHEREAS** the federal government is, over objections, reintroducing gray wolves,
17 grizzly bear, and lynx into several western states in order to enhance the biological diversity
18 in those states; and

19 **WHEREAS** the National Park Service is closing Glacier Bay National Park and
20 Preserve to fishing for crabs because the crabs are an essential element of the ecosystem of
21 the park and the long established and sustainable crab fishery is inconsistent with the
22 preservation of natural crab populations; and

23 **WHEREAS** the policy of the National Park Service in Alaska and several other states
24 is to remove the people rather than the animals when there is a conflict between people and
25 wildlife; and

26 **WHEREAS** federal law provides for extensive penalties for harassment of endangered
27 species;

28 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the
29 National Park Service cease its efforts to remove the beaver from the Potomac Tidal Basin
30 in Washington, D.C., and assist the reestablishment of a healthy beaver population in the
31 nation's capital; and be it

1 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
2 Fish and Wildlife Services to exercise its federal authority and cite, with criminal violations,
3 members and contractors of the National Park Service who harass the Potomac Tidal Basin
4 beavers; and be it

5 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
6 National Park Service to investigate the habitat requirements for beaver in Washington, D.C.,
7 and the adaptations that beaver have made to cope with the unique urban environment of
8 Washington, D.C., establish protected beaver habitat areas in Washington, D.C., and use good
9 science in its actions regarding beaver in Washington, D.C.

10 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President
11 of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; to the Honorable Bruce Babbitt,
12 Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior, to Robert G. Stanton, Director, National Park
13 Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; to Jamie Rappaport Clark, Director, Fish and
14 Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior; to all members of the U.S. Congress; to the
15 Honorable John Kitzhaber, Governor, State of Oregon; to Paul G. Risser, Ph.D., President,
16 Oregon State University; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank
17 Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of
18 the Alaska delegation in Congress.