

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

1999

Source
CSHJR 15(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.
13



Relating to support for the "American Land Sovereignty Protection Act" in the United States Congress.

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

WHEREAS the United Nations has designated 67 sites in the United States as "World Heritage Sites" or "Biosphere Reserves," which altogether are about 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 regulations governing lands belonging to the United States; 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 Scientific, Educational, and Culture Organization operate under independent national committees such as the United States National Man and Biosphere Committee that have no legislative directives or authorization from the Congress; and

WHEREAS these international designations as presently handled are an open invitation to the international community to interfere in domestic economies and land use decisions; 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 former Assistant Secretary of the Interior George T. Frampton, Jr., and the President used the fact that Yellowstone National Park had been designated as a "World Heritage Site" as justification for intervening in the environmental impact statement process and blocking possible development of an underground mine on private land in Montana outside of the park; and

WHEREAS a recent designation of a portion of Kamchatka as a "World Heritage Site" was followed immediately by efforts from environmental groups to block investment insurance for development projects on Kamchatka that are supported by the local communities; and

WHEREAS environmental groups and the National Park Service have been working to establish an International Park, a World Heritage Site, and a Marine Biosphere Reserve covering parts of western Alaska, eastern Russia, and the Bering Sea; and

WHEREAS, as occurred in Montana, such designations could be used to block development projects on state and private land in western Alaska; and

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

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

WHEREAS such international designations could be used to harass or block any commercial activity, including pipelines, railroads, and power transmission lines; and

WHEREAS the President and the executive branch of the United States have, by Executive Order and other agreements, implemented these designations without approval by the Congress; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Interior, in cooperation with the Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage, has identified the Aleutian Island Unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Krusenstern National Monument, Denali National Park, Gates of the Arctic National Park, and Katmai

National Park as likely to meet the criteria for future nomination as World Heritage Sites; and

WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature objects to the nomination or designation of any World Heritage Sites or Biosphere Reserves in Alaska without the specific consent of the Alaska State Legislature; and

WHEREAS actions by the President in applying international agreements to lands owned by the United States may circumvent the Congress; and

WHEREAS Congressman Don Young introduced House Resolution No. 901 in the 105th Congress entitled the "American Land Sovereignty Protection Act of 1997" that required the explicit approval of the Congress prior to restricting any use of United States land under international agreements; and

WHEREAS Congressman Don Young has reintroduced this legislation in the 106th Congress as House Resolution No. 883, which is entitled the "American Land Sovereignty Protection Act";

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports House Resolution 883, the "American Land Sovereignty Protection Act," that reaffirms the constitutional authority of the Congress as the elected representatives of the people over the federally owned land of the United States and urges the swift introduction and passage of such act by the 106th Congress; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature objects to the nomination or designation of any sites in Alaska as World Heritage Sites or Biosphere Reserves without the prior consent of the Alaska State Legislature.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.