

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE JAMES

Introduced: 2/17/99

Referred: House Special Committee on World Trade and State/Federal Relations, Resources

A RESOLUTION

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

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

4 WHEREAS the United Nations has designated 67 sites in the United States as "World
**5 Heritage Sites" or "Biosphere Reserves," which altogether are about equal in size to the State
6 of Colorado, the eighth largest state; and**

7 WHEREAS art. IV, sec. 3, United States Constitution, provides that the United States
**8 Congress shall make all needed regulations governing lands belonging to the United States;
9 and**

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

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

1 **WHEREAS** these international designations as presently handled are an open invitation
2 to the international community to interfere in domestic economies and land use decisions; and

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

6 **WHEREAS** former Assistant Secretary of the Interior George T. Frampton, Jr., and
7 the President used the fact that Yellowstone National Park had been designated as a "World
8 Heritage Site" as justification for intervening in the environmental impact statement process
9 and blocking possible development of an underground mine on private land in Montana
10 outside of the park; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1 National Park as likely to meet the criteria for future nomination as World Heritage Sites; and
2 **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature objects to the nomination or designation of
3 any World Heritage Sites or Biosphere Reserves in Alaska without the specific consent of the
4 Alaska State Legislature; and

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

7 **WHEREAS** Congressman Don Young introduced House Resolution No. 901 in the
8 105th Congress entitled the "American Lands Sovereignty Protection Act of 1997" that
9 required the explicit approval of the Congress prior to restricting any use of United States land
10 under international agreements; and

11 **WHEREAS** comparable legislation has not yet been introduced in the 106th Congress;

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports an "American Lands
13 Sovereignty Protection Act" that reaffirms the constitutional authority of the Congress as the
14 elected representatives of the people over the federally owned land of the United States and
15 urges the swift introduction and passage of such act by the 106th Congress; and be it

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

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