

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6(RES)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 1/26/01

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES WILSON, Williams, Hudson, Scalzi, Dyson, James, Green, Lancaster, Morgan, Ogan, Murkowski, Rokeberg, Mulder, Meyer, Harris, McGuire

SENATORS Kelly, Green, Leman, Ward, Cowdery, Therriault, Halford

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to opposition to the inclusion of national forests in Alaska within former**
2 **President Clinton's Roadless Area Conservation rule and supporting the overturning of**
3 **this inclusion by litigation, by congressional action, or by action of President Bush.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** the forest products industry has been and continues to be an important
6 economic sector in Alaska that contributes significant employment income to the economy of
7 the state, and, through purchases of timber from National Forest System lands, contributes
8 significant revenue to local communities through the 25 percent revenue sharing provisions of
9 federal law; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Roadless Area Conservation rule is contrary to the land management
11 planning process for individual forests established by the National Forest Management Act of
12 1976 and its implementing regulations; and

13 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule to the Tongass and
14 Chugach National Forests designates significant additional acreage as administrative, de facto
15 wilderness areas within Alaska; and

1 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule in Alaska is contrary
2 to sec. 708(b)(4), Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which
3 specifically prohibits another roadless area review and evaluation (RARE) on national forest
4 lands in Alaska for the purpose of setting aside commercial forest land as wilderness; and

5 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule in Alaska is contrary
6 to sec. 1326(a) of ANILCA, which prohibits the withdrawal of more than 5,000 acres, in the
7 aggregate, of public lands within Alaska without the consent of the Congress; and

8 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule in Alaska is contrary
9 to sec. 1326(b) of ANILCA, which expressly prohibits studies of public lands for the purpose
10 of considering the establishment of new conservation system units, recreation areas, national
11 conservation areas, or for related or similar purposes; and

12 **WHEREAS** the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990 and other Congressional and
13 administrative actions have withdrawn more than 97 percent of the Tongass National Forest
14 from availability for timber harvest and other resource development opportunities; and

15 **WHEREAS** the 1997 and 1999 revisions of the Tongass Land Management Plan
16 (TLMP) further reduced the available commercial forest lands in the Tongass to 576,000
17 acres out of nearly 6,000,000 suitable acres across the forest; and

18 **WHEREAS** the available commercial forest lands remaining after the 1999 TLMP
19 amendments are insufficient to satisfy the raw material needs of Southeast Alaska's forest
20 products manufacturing industry, given the plan's maximum annual economic offering level
21 of 153,000,000 board feet; and

22 **WHEREAS**, by applying the roadless policy to the Tongass, the federal government
23 has further reduced the available commercial forest lands in the Tongass to less than half the
24 currently available acreage and will further reduce the maximum annual offering level to less
25 than 50,000,000 board feet; and

26 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule to the Tongass,
27 together with Under Secretary Lyons' 1999 unilateral TLMP amendment, nullifies the results
28 of the United States Forest Service's 1986-1997 planning process in the Tongass, which cost
29 the taxpayers more than \$13,000,000; and

30 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule to the Tongass,
31 together with Under Secretary Lyons' 1999 unilateral TLMP amendment, will further

1 destabilize the already unstable timber-based economy of Southeast Alaska by forcing the
2 closure of most of the remaining forest products manufacturing facilities, resulting in loss of
3 employment and associated negative socioeconomic impacts within timber-dependent
4 communities and the Southeast Alaska region; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Chugach National Forest has spent three years and several million
6 dollars conducting a revision to its land management plan and is within a few months of
7 issuing the Final Environmental Impact Statement for that plan; and

8 **WHEREAS** a wide range of interests from the Alaska public has been involved in the
9 Chugach land management planning process, working to develop a range of plan alternatives
10 that respond to the public's interests, needs, and concerns, and the Roadless Area
11 Conservation rule will render that involvement and expense pointless and undermine public
12 confidence in the planning process; and

13 **WHEREAS** the public, through the Chugach Land Management Plan revision
14 scoping process, has expressed deep concern that the approximately 130,000 acres of the
15 Chugach National Forest suffering from spruce bark beetle damage must be managed for the
16 restoration of a green, healthy forest, and the Roadless Area Conservation rule prevents access
17 required by land managers to accomplish that restoration work; and

18 **WHEREAS** application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule will render it
19 virtually impossible for inholders and adjacent landowners, particularly families and small
20 business owners, to obtain the access to their property that was promised them in ANILCA;

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly opposes the Roadless
22 Area Conservation rule, and particularly opposes the illegal inclusion of the Tongass and
23 Chugach National Forests in the Roadless Area Conservation rule; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature fully supports Governor
25 Knowles' decision to litigate against the application of the Roadless Area Conservation rule to
26 National Forest System lands in Alaska; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges members of the
28 Alaska delegation in Congress to use all available means to set aside the Roadless Area
29 Conservation rule through Congressional action; and be it

30 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges President George
31 W. Bush to overturn the classification and inclusion of the national forests located inside

1 Alaska's boundaries.

2 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
3 of the United States; the Honorable Ann Veneman, United States Secretary of Agriculture;
4 Mike Dombeck, Chief of the United States Forest Service, United States Department of
5 Agriculture; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.
6 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
7 delegation in Congress.