

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 12

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/26/05

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to the Joint Rural Assessment Task Force.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Constitution of the State of Alaska provides that the Alaska State
4 Legislature shall provide for the performance of services it deems necessary or advisable in
5 unorganized boroughs and that the legislature serves as the assembly for the unorganized
6 borough; and

7 **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature exercises that responsibility by proposing
8 and implementing policies that encourage self-determination, self-sufficiency, long-range
9 economic stability and sustainability, and assumption of responsibility by residents of rural
10 communities; and

11 **WHEREAS**, notwithstanding these commitments and efforts, recent developments in
12 rural communities, including sky-rocketing energy prices and the erosion of revenue sharing
13 and other forms of assistance to local governments, have compromised the ability of local
14 communities to provide basic local services and have underscored the need for the Alaska
15 State Legislature to conduct a reassessment of the efficacy of its policies; and

16 **WHEREAS** in the past few years many local communities in Alaska have either had

1 to dissolve, enter deeply into debt, or cease providing basic local services as a result of lower
2 local revenue; and

3 **WHEREAS** the Denali Commission, a state-federal partnership, regularly invests in
4 the rural Alaskan communities and has developed a five-year strategic plan to guide its
5 activities; and

6 **WHEREAS** the governor took action to address the serious challenges posed by high
7 energy costs in rural Alaska by appointing the Rural Energy Action Council to recommend
8 short-term and long-term approaches to address the costs; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Rural Energy Action Council has recently released its report and has
10 recommended a series of actions which, taken together, could provide partial relief to the
11 communities; and

12 **WHEREAS** crafting additional measures that will efficaciously address both short-
13 term and long-term sustainability issues will be dependent upon conducting an appropriate
14 needs assessment to guide these efforts; and

15 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Municipal League and the First Alaskans Institute have
16 committed to undertake such an assessment by examining conditions in a representative
17 sampling of rural communities;

18 **BE IT RESOLVED** that, pursuant to the authority granted under art. II, sec. 11,
19 Constitution of the State of Alaska to establish interim committees, the Joint Rural
20 Assessment Task Force is established; and be it

21 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Joint Rural Assessment Task Force shall consist of
22 seven members, three appointed by the president of the senate, three appointed by the speaker
23 of the house of representatives, a designee from the First Alaskans Institute and a designee
24 from the Alaska Municipal League; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Joint Rural Assessment Task Force shall consider
26 the findings and recommendations resulting from the needs assessment prepared by the
27 Alaska Municipal League and the First Alaskans Institute, the Denali Commission's Five-
28 Year Strategic Plan, and the Rural Energy Action Council's Finding and Action
29 Recommendations, travel to communities to hold hearings on the issues, and deliver a report
30 of its finding to the legislature by January 15, 2006, together with appropriate legislature
31 proposals for consideration during the Second Regular Session of the Twenty-Fourth Alaska

1 Legislature; and be it

2 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Joint Rural Assessment Task Force may meet
3 during and between legislative sessions and that the task force is terminated on February 1,
4 2006.