

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 29
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES HAWKER, Harris, Berkowitz, Gara, Kerttula

Introduced: 2/1/06
Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Requesting the commissioner of natural resources to complete a management plan for**
2 **the area encompassing the Pebble copper deposit and requesting a report to the**
3 **legislature.**

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

5 **WHEREAS**, when Alaska achieved statehood in 1959, it was clear that the state's
6 small population needed to use resource development for economic support; and

7 **WHEREAS** revenue derived from responsible mineral, fish, timber, and oil extraction
8 has provided employment and dramatically improved the quality of life in Alaska; and

9 **WHEREAS** continued responsible development of our natural resources is vital to the
10 future economic well-being of the state; and

11 **WHEREAS** the state's constitution encourages the development of the state's
12 resources by making them available for maximum use consistent with the public interest and
13 for the maximum benefit to the people of the state; and

14 **WHEREAS** the state continues to be rich in undeveloped natural resources, although
15 some proposed uses may be in conflict with each other; and

1 **WHEREAS** the resolution of resource development conflicts requires proper
2 management, including the adoption, maintenance, and, when appropriate, revision by the
3 commissioner of natural resources of regional land use plans providing for the use and
4 management of state-owned land; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Bristol Bay Area Plan is a comprehensive and consistent
6 consideration of the wide diversity of resources and uses within the region of the state that
7 includes the Pebble copper deposit; and

8 **WHEREAS** the Pebble copper deposit is part of a much larger series of metal-rich,
9 coalescing hydrothermal sulfide systems estimated to contain 42,000,000 ounces of gold,
10 24,600,000,000 pounds of copper, and 1,500,000,000 pounds of molybdenum, the
11 development of which may require an open pit mine two miles long, 1.75 miles wide, and
12 1,600 feet deep, and a 100-mile pipeline and access road to Iniskin Bay; and

13 **WHEREAS** open pit mining requires careful advance planning and consideration of
14 potential negative environmental consequences, including impacts to fish habitat, acid mine
15 drainage, and other water quality issues resulting from mine tailings and exposed rock that
16 may have to be remedied forever; and

17 **WHEREAS** the area encompassing the Pebble copper deposit is located in an area of
18 significant seismic activity, adjacent to the Lake Clark National Park and Preserve near Lake
19 Iliamna, and at the headwaters of the Kvichak and Mulchatna River and Talarik Creek
20 drainages; and

21 **WHEREAS** this sparsely populated Iliamna region is known for world-class trout
22 fishing and is the spawning ground for Bristol Bay's massive salmon runs and a calving area
23 for caribou; and

24 **WHEREAS** the river corridors draining the area encompassing the Pebble copper
25 deposit are central to commercial, subsistence, and recreational fish and wildlife resource
26 production and have been closed to mining entry for more than 20 years; and

27 **WHEREAS**, when the Bristol Bay Area Plan was revised in 2005, the plan estimated
28 the area encompassing the Pebble copper deposit had contained mineral deposits of only one-
29 fourth of current estimates, and did not contemplate the scope, magnitude, and potential
30 collateral consequences of the open pit mine that would be required to recover those
31 resources; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Bristol Bay Area Plan provides that the development of the Pebble
2 copper deposit should occur only after a public process that is as extensive as the Bristol Bay
3 Area Plan itself and requires site-specific data and design for the proposed Pebble
4 development that was not available when the Bristol Bay Area Plan was revised in 2005;

5 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature finds that the commissioner of
6 natural resources should complete a management plan for the area encompassing the Pebble
7 copper deposit within the Bristol Bay Area Plan, including consideration of site-specific data
8 and design for the development, before issuing any final permits for that development; and be
9 it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** the Alaska State Legislature requests the commissioner of
11 natural resources upon receipt of a project plan of sufficient detail to evaluate the scope and
12 range of potential effects of the project, immediately undertake and complete the specific
13 management plan, emphasizing consideration of physical, economic, and social factors
14 affecting the area and providing for meaningful participation in the planning process by
15 affected local governments, state and federal agencies, adjacent landowners, and the general
16 public; and be it

17 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the
18 commissioner of natural resources consider all information and testimony accumulated in the
19 management plan process and, before issuing any final permits for the development of the
20 Pebble copper deposit, prepare a report to the legislature documenting any public issues or
21 conflicts identified in that process, the commissioner's evaluation of those issues or conflicts,
22 and the commissioner's conclusion regarding the appropriateness of classifying the area
23 encompassing the Pebble copper deposit for mineral development.