

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 1/30/06

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS

A RESOLUTION

1 **Opposing the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, H.R. 3283, 108th
4 United States Congress, was introduced in the United States House of Representatives and
5 would have authorized the United States Forest Service, the United States Bureau of Land
6 Management, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, and the
7 United States Bureau of Reclamation to charge visitor fees for recreation on publicly owned
8 land; and

9 **WHEREAS** the 108th United States Congress enacted H.R. 4818, and the Federal
10 Lands Recreation Enhancement Act is now codified as 16 U.S.C. 6801 - 6814; and

11 **WHEREAS** the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act includes criminal
12 penalties and is substantive legislation that fundamentally changes the way public land in the
13 state is funded and managed; and

14 **WHEREAS** the concept of paying fees to use public land is contrary to the idea that
15 public land belongs to the people and is land where every person is granted access and is
16 welcome, a concept that has been and should remain in place; and

1 **WHEREAS** recreational fees constitute double taxation and bear no relationship to
2 the actual costs associated with recreational use such as hiking, picnicking, observing wildlife,
3 or scenic driving on state roads and public rights-of-way; and

4 **WHEREAS** the fees imposed by the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act are
5 a regressive tax that places an undue burden on the people living in rural areas adjacent to or
6 surrounded by large areas of federal land and discriminates against lower-income and
7 working Alaskans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their enjoyment of public land;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** the public land access fees in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement
10 Act are highly controversial and are opposed by hundreds of organizations, several state
11 legislatures, and millions of rural Americans; and

12 **WHEREAS** the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act establishes an
13 interagency pass that may be used to cover entrance fees and recreational amenity fees for
14 federal public land and water, disregarding the substantially different ways in which national
15 parks and other federal public land are managed and funded; and

16 **WHEREAS** the limited means of expressing opposition to and the lack of public
17 debate in the implementation of the fee program raises the concern that some citizens may be
18 deterred from visiting and enjoying public land in the state and throughout the United States;
19 and

20 **WHEREAS** tourism is an important industry to the state, and the imposition of
21 recreational use fees will have a negative effect on state and local economies;

22 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature calls on the United States
23 Congress to repeal the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, which was enacted on
24 December 8, 2004, and to ensure that no recreational fees be imposed to use federal public
25 land in the state.

26 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
27 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States
28 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Gale Norton, United States Secretary of the
29 Interior; the Honorable J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
30 Honorable Bill Frist, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Harry Reid, Minority
31 Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the

1 Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
2 Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable
3 Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and, by
4 electronic transmission, all other members of the 109th United States Congress.