

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES THOMAS, Johnson, Lynn, Wilson

Introduced: 4/26/07

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Opposing the designation of any area in the state as a world heritage site, biosphere**
2 **reserve, or any other type of international designation without the consent of the Alaska**
3 **State Legislature and affected local governments; and urging the United States Congress**
4 **to enact legislation to require congressional approval before an area in the United States**
5 **may be considered for an international designation.**

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

7 **WHEREAS** the United Nations has designated over 60 sites in the United States as
8 "world heritage sites" or "biosphere reserves," which altogether are equal in size to the State
9 of Colorado, the eighth largest state; and

10 **WHEREAS** art. IV, sec. 3, United States Constitution, provides that the United States
11 Congress shall make all needed rules and regulations respecting the territory or other property
12 belonging to the United States and nothing in the constitution shall be construed to prejudice
13 any claims of the United States or of any state; and

14 **WHEREAS** many of the United Nations' designations include private property
15 inholdings and contemplate buffer zones of adjacent land; and

1 **WHEREAS** some international land designations, such as those under the United
2 States Biosphere Reserve Program and the Man and Biosphere Program of the United Nations
3 Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, operate under independent national
4 committees such as the United States Man and Biosphere National Committee that have no
5 legislative directives or authorization from the United States Congress; and

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

9 **WHEREAS** these international designations are an open invitation to the international
10 community to interfere in domestic economies and land use decisions; and

11 **WHEREAS** environmental groups and the United States Department of the Interior,
12 National Park Service, have been working to establish an international park, a world heritage
13 site, and a marine biosphere reserve called Beringia covering parts of western Alaska, eastern
14 Russia, and the Bering Sea, and in Glacier Bay National Park; and

15 **WHEREAS** foreign companies and countries could use these international
16 designations in western Alaska to block or inhibit economic development that they perceive
17 as competition; and

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

20 **WHEREAS** international designations may be used to harass or block industrial
21 development in the state, including projects related to fishing, mining, timber harvesting,
22 railroads, power transmission lines, pipelines, and other oil and gas development; and

23 **WHEREAS** the subsistence and recreational use of fish and game resources in the
24 state could be severely and negatively affected by international land use designations; and

25 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of the Interior, in cooperation with the
26 Federal Interagency Panel for World Heritage, has identified the Aleutian Island Unit of the
27 Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Cape
28 Krusenstern National Monument, Denali National Park, Gates of the Arctic National Park,
29 Glacier Bay National Park, and Katmai National Park as likely to meet the criteria for future
30 nomination as world heritage sites; and

31 **WHEREAS**, under current law, the United States Secretary of the Interior can

1 nominate world heritage sites, and the United States Secretary of State can nominate
2 biosphere reserves, both without approval by the Congress;

3 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes and reaffirms the
4 constitutional authority of the United States Congress as the elected representatives of the
5 people over the federally owned land of the United States; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature objects to the nomination
7 or designation of any site in Alaska as a world heritage site, biosphere reserve, or any other
8 type of international designation without the prior consent of the Alaska State Legislature and
9 affected local governments; and be it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
11 Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation that will require approval by an Act of
12 Congress before any area in the United States or its territories can be studied as a potential, or
13 nominated to be, a world heritage site, biosphere reserve, or any other type of international
14 designation.

15 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
16 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States
17 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, United States Secretary of
18 the Interior; the Honorable Condoleezza Rice, United States Secretary of State; the Honorable
19 Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Harry Reid,
20 Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the
21 U.S. Senate; the Honorable Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of
22 Representatives; the Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of
23 Representatives; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S.
24 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
25 delegation in Congress; and all members of the 110th United States Congress by electronic
26 transmission.