

**SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 401**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 8/3/08

Referred: Secretary's Desk

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to open the coastal plain of the**  
2 **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas exploration, development, and**  
3 **production.**

4 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:**

5 **WHEREAS**, in 16 U.S.C. 3142 (sec. 1002 of the Alaska National Interest Lands  
6 Conservation Act (ANILCA)), the United States Congress reserved the right to permit further  
7 oil and gas exploration, development, and production within the coastal plain of the Arctic  
8 National Wildlife Refuge; and

9 **WHEREAS** the oil and gas industry, the state, and the United States Department of  
10 the Interior consider the Arctic coastal plain to have the highest potential for discovery of very  
11 large oil and gas accumulations on the continent of North America, estimated to include as  
12 much as 10,000,000,000 barrels of recoverable oil and significant amounts of natural gas; and

13 **WHEREAS**, while new oil and natural gas field developments on the North Slope of  
14 Alaska, such as Alpine, Northstar, and West Sak, may temporarily slow the decline in  
15 production, only giant coastal plain fields have the theoretical capability of increasing the

1 production volume of Alaska oil and gas to a significant degree; and

2 **WHEREAS** the state's future energy independence would be enhanced with  
3 additional natural gas production from the North Slope of Alaska, including what are  
4 expected to be significant gas reserves in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and the  
5 development of those reserves would enhance the economic viability of the proposed Alaska  
6 Natural Gas Pipeline; and

7 **WHEREAS** the proposed Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline and the Trans Alaska Pipeline  
8 System are transportation facilities that will be and are national assets that are integral to  
9 satisfying the present and future needs of the United States; and

10 **WHEREAS** the "1002 study area" is part of the coastal plain located within the North  
11 Slope Borough, and many of the residents of the North Slope Borough, who are  
12 predominantly Inupiat Eskimo, are supportive of development in the "1002 study area"; and

13 **WHEREAS** enhancements in technology can be used in a manner that minimizes the  
14 area within the refuge that is used for exploration and development, while providing the  
15 nation with a needed supply of oil and gas; and

16 **WHEREAS** the oil and gas industry is using innovative technology and  
17 environmental practices in the new field developments at Alpine and Northstar, and those  
18 techniques are directly applicable to operating on the coastal plain and would enhance  
19 environmental protection beyond traditionally high standards; and

20 **WHEREAS** the oil and gas industry has shown at Prudhoe Bay, as well as at other  
21 locations along the Arctic coastal plain, that it is capable of conducting oil and gas activity  
22 without adversely affecting the environment or wildlife populations; and

23 **WHEREAS** opening the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge now  
24 allows sufficient time for planning environmental safeguards, development, and national  
25 security review; and

26 **WHEREAS** the state will ensure the continued health and productivity of the  
27 Porcupine caribou herd and the protection of land, water, and wildlife resources during the  
28 exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; and

29 **WHEREAS** 8,900,000 of the 19,000,000 acres of the refuge have already been set  
30 aside as wilderness; and

31 **WHEREAS** the 1,500,000-acre coastal plain of the refuge makes up only eight

1 percent of the 19,000,000-acre refuge, and the development of the oil and gas reserves in the  
2 refuge's coastal plain would affect an area of only 2,000 to 7,000 acres, which is less than  
3 one-half of one percent of the area of the coastal plain; and

4 **WHEREAS** the continued competitiveness and stability of the state and its economy  
5 require that the Senate consider national trends toward renewable energy development; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Senate encourages the use of revenue from any development in the  
7 Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for the development of renewable energy resources in the  
8 state;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate urges the United States Congress to pass  
10 legislation to open the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas  
11 exploration, development, and production, and that the Senate is adamantly opposed to further  
12 wilderness or other restrictive designation in the area of the coastal plain of the Arctic  
13 National Wildlife Refuge; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the oil and gas exploration, development, and  
15 production be conducted in a manner that protects the environment and the naturally  
16 occurring population levels of the Porcupine caribou herd on which the Gwich'in and other  
17 local residents depend, that uses directional drilling and other advances in technology to  
18 minimize the development footprint in the "1002 study area," and that uses the state's work  
19 force to the maximum extent possible; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Senate urges the United States Congress to pass  
21 legislation opening the "1002 study area" for oil and gas development while continuing to  
22 work on measures for increasing the development and use of renewable energy technologies;  
23 and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Senate opposes any unilateral reduction in royalty  
25 revenue from exploration and development of the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife  
26 Refuge and any attempt to coerce the State of Alaska into accepting less than the 90 percent  
27 of the oil, gas, and mineral royalties from the federal land in Alaska that was promised to the  
28 state at statehood.

29 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President  
30 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States  
31 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Dirk Kempthorne, United States Secretary of

1 the Interior; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the  
2 Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the  
3 Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell,  
4 Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair of the U.S. Senate  
5 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable  
6 Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,  
7 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 110th United  
8 States Congress.