

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR THERRIAULT

Introduced: 1/26/09
Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Requesting the Governor and the Department of Fish and Game to halt and reverse any**
2 **effort to introduce wood bison into areas planned for development.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the Department of Fish and Game is currently engaged in a program to
5 import and introduce wood bison into wild areas of the state, including into the Nenana
6 Basin/Minto Flats area; and

7 **WHEREAS**, in June 2008, the Department of Fish and Game imported 53 wood
8 bison from Canada and isolated the animals at the Alaska Conservation Wildlife Center with
9 the expectation of releasing them into the wild after holding them for two years in isolation;
10 and

11 **WHEREAS** reintroduction of wood bison into the wild would immediately result in a
12 classification of the wood bison under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) as
13 endangered because the wood bison is considered "foreign listed" under the Endangered
14 Species Act; because no purebred wood bison are currently found in the United States, the
15 United States Fish and Wildlife Service has not listed the species; and

16 **WHEREAS** the introduction of endangered lynx in Colorado and three

1 subpopulations of bighorn sheep in California have in the past resulted in Endangered Species
2 Act listings that have negatively affected development activities in those two states; and

3 **WHEREAS**, subsequent to an endangered species listing, development activities that
4 could adversely affect wood bison or their habitat on land areas into which they have been
5 introduced would be viewed as a violation of the Endangered Species Act; and

6 **WHEREAS** Doyon, Ltd. and other landowners plan to explore for oil and natural gas
7 on the Minto Flats and in other areas of the Nenana Basin; and

8 **WHEREAS** the presence of the wood bison in those areas would preclude activities
9 essential to oil and gas exploration; and

10 **WHEREAS** introduction of the wood bison and a subsequent listing of the species
11 under the Endangered Species Act would negatively affect potential revenue to the State of
12 Alaska, the Alaska Mental Health Trust, and University of Alaska, as well as numerous
13 municipalities and Native corporations; and

14 **WHEREAS** the Governor of Alaska has the authority to direct the Department of Fish
15 and Game to halt and reverse its program for introduction of wood bison into the Alaska wild;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests the Governor to direct
17 the commissioner of fish and game to halt and reverse any further efforts to introduce wood
18 bison into the Alaska wild.

19 **A COPY** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Denby Lloyd,
20 Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game.