

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 11

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/9/10

Referred: Secretary's Desk

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to the mining and processing of rare earth elements in Alaska and to the**
2 **stockpiling of rare earth elements; and urging the United States Congress to pass H.R.**
3 **4866.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** the United States once was largely self-sufficient in rare earth elements;
6 and

7 **WHEREAS** mineable concentrations of rare earth elements are not commonly found;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** rare earth elements are exceptionally valuable because of their unique
10 chemical, electrical, and physical properties; and

11 **WHEREAS** the unique chemical, electrical, and physical properties of rare earth
12 elements make them indispensable for a wide variety of emerging critical technology, and, in
13 particular, technology needed for defense and clean energy applications; and

14 **WHEREAS** the United States has become almost entirely dependent on foreign
15 sources of yttrium, niobium, and rare earth elements, as well as associated elements of

1 tantalum and zirconium; and

2 **WHEREAS** dysprosium and terbium are among the scarcest, most valuable, and
3 sought after rare earth metals needed for green technology and military applications; and

4 **WHEREAS** the value-added technology and skill to allow both the recovery of rare
5 earth elements from mineral forms in ore and the manufacture of finished products, such as
6 magnets, from rare earth elements has almost entirely migrated to China, as has the actual
7 mining of rare earth ores; and

8 **WHEREAS** China currently accounts for 97 percent of the world's production of rare
9 earth elements; and

10 **WHEREAS** China has reduced its exports of rare earth elements; and

11 **WHEREAS** a future in which manufacturing of wind turbines, solar panels, advanced
12 batteries, and geothermal steam turbines are produced only outside of the United States poses
13 a risk to the country; and

14 **WHEREAS**, after extraction of rare earth ores, processing, refining, and production
15 are needed to provide the United States with self-reliance in these technologies; and

16 **WHEREAS**, in contrast to rare earth element deposits found elsewhere in the United
17 States, Bokan Mountain discoveries on the southern end of Prince of Wales Island are rich in
18 the heavy rare earth elements of europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, thulium,
19 holmium, erbium, ytterbium, lutetium, and yttrium; and

20 **WHEREAS** continued exploration, together with the establishment of secondary
21 processing and research facilities in Alaska, would result in new career opportunities for
22 Alaskans; and

23 **WHEREAS** current economic opportunities on Prince of Wales Island and throughout
24 Alaska have significantly decreased; and

25 **WHEREAS** the federal Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management
26 Plan has been completed and the Bokan Mountain area zoned for mineral development; and

27 **WHEREAS** the state's Prince of Wales Island Area Plan has been completed and the
28 Kendrick Bay area classified for mineral and forestry access and development; and

29 **WHEREAS** overland access and transport requirements in the Tongass National
30 Forest are mitigated by immediate access to the mining property by ocean transport; and

31 **WHEREAS** H.R. 4866 has been introduced in the United States Congress to

1 reestablish a competitive domestic rare earths elements production industry, a domestic rare
2 earth processing, refining, purification, and metals production industry, a domestic rare earth
3 metals alloying industry, and a domestic rare earth-based magnet production industry and
4 supply chain in the United States;

5 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Senate urges the United States Congress expeditiously to
6 pass H.R. 4866; and be it

7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Senate recommends continued exploration of rare
8 earth deposits in Alaska, the issuance of permits, as promptly as allowed by law, for
9 extraction, processing, and production of rare earth materials on the Bokan Mountain
10 properties, and commencement of planning for extraction, processing, and production of rare
11 earth materials by industry.

12 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ike Skelton, Chair of the
13 Armed Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Sander M.
14 Levin, Acting Chair of the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives;
15 the Honorable Barney Frank, Chair of the Financial Services Committee of the U.S. House of
16 Representatives; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S.
17 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
18 delegation in Congress; and to all other members of the 111th United States Congress.