

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR OLSON

Introduced: 2/4/11

Referred: Transportation

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Army and United States Air Force to extend the public**
2 **comment period for the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex Modernization and**
3 **Enhancement Environmental Impact Statement that ends February 18, 2011, for a**
4 **minimum of 90 days to allow for effective communication and full state and user**
5 **involvement during the comment period.**

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

7 **WHEREAS** Alaska's Military Operations Areas, including in the air and on the land
8 and sea, are necessary to replicate realistic conditions for training and testing of combat
9 systems; and

10 **WHEREAS** expanded weapons and sensor capabilities, extended mobility, and
11 improved communications have driven the need for larger training areas; and

12 **WHEREAS** the federal Environmental Impact Statement for the actions and projects
13 identified by the United States Army and the United States Air Force in a proposal known as
14 Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex Modernization and Enhancement was released for public
15 comment on December 10, 2010, preceding the holiday season; and

1 **WHEREAS** the proposals involve expanding and establishing new Military
2 Operations Areas, restricted airspace, and airspace corridors, expanding access to training
3 areas, and developing new ranges and facilities to provide adequate resources to conduct
4 training and testing under realistic and varied conditions; and

5 **WHEREAS** the proposed significant expansion of those Military Operations Areas
6 will have far-reaching effects across multiple segments of the state's communities, industries,
7 and activities, including hunting, tourism, commerce, and aviation; and

8 **WHEREAS** aviation represents approximately \$3,500,000,000 in economic activity
9 in the state and supports an estimated 47,000 jobs, constituting a significant component of the
10 state's economy; and

11 **WHEREAS** proposals for Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex modernization and
12 expansion may greatly affect aviation in the state; and

13 **WHEREAS** the aerospace needs of the civil aviation community have evolved
14 significantly since the last major expansion of Military Operations Areas in the mid-1990s,
15 and the emergence of new technologies has changed how aviation uses airspace; and

16 **WHEREAS** a complete review of existing and proposed airspace uses is needed to
17 consider which alternatives may best suit the overall aviation needs of all users now and in the
18 future; and

19 **WHEREAS** it is vital to ensure that citizens are allowed access to their villages at all
20 times and for all reasons; and

21 **WHEREAS** four villages in the state currently cannot be accessed by air during
22 military operations; and

23 **WHEREAS** proposed military expansion into air corridors will significantly interfere
24 with air traffic into and out of Fairbanks and will affect training operations conducted in the
25 area by general aviation and commercial operators; and

26 **WHEREAS** all divisions and departments of state government must be given
27 adequate time to evaluate thoroughly the effects from the proposed changes in military air
28 space; and

29 **WHEREAS** it is paramount that, for all potential contact between civilian and
30 military operations involving both United States and foreign military aircraft, safety prevails;

31 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States Army

1 and United States Air Force to extend the public comment period for the Joint Pacific Alaska
2 Range Complex Modernization and Enhancement Environmental Impact Statement, which is
3 currently scheduled to close on February 18, 2011, for a minimum of 90 days past that date to
4 allow for effective communication and full state and user involvement during the comment
5 period.

6 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Robert M. Gates, United
7 States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable John M. McHugh, United States Secretary of the
8 Army; the Honorable Michael B. Donley, United States Secretary of the Air Force; and the
9 Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the
10 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.