

(LIMITED RUN SHOWING ALL ADDITIONAL SPONSORSHIPS)

**CS FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2(JUD)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/10/14

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS STEDMAN, Egan, Coghill, McGuire, Bishop, Giessel, Meyer, Stevens, Micciche,  
Kelly

REPRESENTATIVES Millett, Isaacson, Costello

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Congress to act on the request of the governor to acquire for**  
 2 **the state additional land in the Tongass National Forest from the United States**  
 3 **government by purchase or negotiation or by seeking amendment to the Alaska**  
 4 **Statehood Act.**

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

6 **WHEREAS** the Tongass National Forest was created in 1907 by a proclamation of  
 7 President Theodore Roosevelt; and

8 **WHEREAS**, under the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339), the federal  
 9 government provided Alaska with a 103,350,000-acre land entitlement, which was considered  
 10 to be sufficient for the newly formed state to become economically self-supporting; and

11 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339) gave the state 25  
 12 years to select land for entitlement; and

13 **WHEREAS** the 25-year period established in the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508,  
 14 72 Stat. 339) as the period in which the state may select land for entitlement was later  
 15 extended, in effect, by various legislation, with the result that approximately 5,500,000 acres

1 of the land entitlement granted to the state by the Act have not yet been conveyed; and

2 **WHEREAS**, from the 1950s through the early 1990s, the commercial harvest of  
3 timber formed a major part of the economy of Southeast Alaska; and

4 **WHEREAS** the commercial harvest of timber no longer forms a major part of the  
5 economy of Southeast Alaska because the timber industry does not have access to an adequate  
6 amount of timber that can be economically harvested from the Tongass National Forest; and

7 **WHEREAS**, in the past four years, several efforts to revitalize the timber industry in  
8 Southeast Alaska have failed because a timber industry cannot exist without an adequate  
9 timber supply; and

10 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress has placed 40 percent of the Tongass  
11 National Forest off limits for commercial use, and the United States Forest Service has  
12 administratively set aside an additional 58 percent of the Tongass National Forest; and

13 **WHEREAS**, at the present time, only two percent of the Tongass National Forest is  
14 managed for the purpose of providing local communities with the opportunity to harvest  
15 timber; and

16 **WHEREAS** 91 percent of the old growth timber standing in the Tongass National  
17 Forest in 1954 remains standing, and the remaining nine percent that has been harvested has  
18 now been replaced with young growth timber that will begin maturing in about 30 years; and

19 **WHEREAS** findings prepared by the Alaska Timber Jobs Task Force in June 2012  
20 reveal that the timber industry is vitally important to statewide and regional economies in the  
21 state; and

22 **WHEREAS** the principal barrier to job creation in the Southeast Alaska timber  
23 industry is the lack of a sufficient amount of timber that can be economically harvested from  
24 the Tongass National Forest; and

25 **WHEREAS** an unrealistic Tongass Land Management Plan dictated by Washington,  
26 D.C., endless environmental legal appeals, and a lack of political will by public officials who  
27 are in a position to support meeting timber harvest targets have prevented the United States  
28 Forest Service from providing the timber industry access to enough economically harvestable  
29 timber in the Tongass National Forest to make the timber industry commercially viable in  
30 Southeast Alaska; and

31 **WHEREAS**, because the United States Forest Service has not been able to provide

1 the timber industry with access to enough economically harvestable timber in the Tongass  
2 National Forest to sustain the timber industry in Southeast Alaska, it is time for the United  
3 States Congress to act on the governor's request to acquire additional land in the Tongass  
4 National Forest that will provide enough economically harvestable timber to create a  
5 sustainable economic base for the communities of Southeast Alaska; and

6 **WHEREAS** sec. 6 of the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339) limited the  
7 state's selection of land from the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest to  
8 400,000 acres with the intention of preserving timber for federal long-term sales; and

9 **WHEREAS** sec. 6 of the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339) allowed  
10 the state to select land in other regions of the state without restricting the use of the land to  
11 recreation and community expansion, and, because the timber industry in Southeast Alaska  
12 has become unsustainable, the state should be entitled to acquire some of its remaining land  
13 entitlement under the Alaska Statehood Act from the Tongass National Forest;

14 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the United  
15 States Congress to Act on the governor's request to negotiate state land entitlements under  
16 sec. 6 of the Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339) or work to amend the Alaska  
17 Statehood Act for the purpose of acquiring forested land in the Tongass National Forest; and  
18 be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, if the United States Congress fails to convey forested  
20 land in the Tongass National Forest either by negotiating state land entitlements under the  
21 Alaska Statehood Act (P.L. 85-508, 72 Stat. 339) or by amending the Alaska Statehood Act,  
22 the Alaska State Legislature urges the governor to negotiate the purchase of forested land in  
23 the Tongass National Forest from the federal government.

24 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of  
25 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and  
26 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Sally Jewell, United States Secretary of the  
27 Interior; the Honorable Tom Vilsack, United States Secretary of Agriculture; and the  
28 Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the  
29 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress;  
30 and the Honorable Sean Parnell, Governor of Alaska.