

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 10
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR MICCICHE

Introduced: 1/24/14

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Proclaiming March 27, 2014, to be the Great Alaska Earthquake Remembrance Day.**

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

3 **WHEREAS**, on March 27, 1964, at 5:36 p.m. Alaska Standard Time, a magnitude 9.2
4 earthquake lasting nearly four minutes struck Alaska; and

5 **WHEREAS** the subduction zone earthquake was caused by the rupture of the
6 Aleutian-Alaska megathrust reverse fault between the Pacific and North American plates near
7 College Fjord in Prince William Sound; the epicenter was located at Latitude 61.04 North,
8 Longitude 147.73 West, at a depth of approximately 15.5 miles, and with an estimated peak
9 ground acceleration of 0.14 – 0.18 g; and

10 **WHEREAS** ocean floor shifts created large tsunamis of up to 220 feet, massive
11 underwater landslides, and large rockslides throughout an area of approximately 200,000
12 square miles; and

13 **WHEREAS** the powerful earthquake produced liquefaction in the region causing
14 ground fissures and failures, permanently raising some areas near Kodiak by 30 feet and
15 dropping other land near the head of Turnagain Arm by as much as eight feet; and

16 **WHEREAS** the earthquake was the most powerful recorded earthquake in North

1 America and the second most powerful ever recorded by seismograph; and

2 **WHEREAS** as many as 143 deaths and many serious injuries were attributed to the
3 earthquake and the resulting tsunamis and landslides, which also left approximately 2,000
4 people homeless; and

5 **WHEREAS** among those killed were people who died attempting to save others,
6 including members of an Alaska National Guard flight crew who perished when their aircraft
7 crashed off the shores of Valdez during a relief mission; and

8 **WHEREAS** as many as 30 square blocks of downtown Anchorage and the Turnagain
9 Heights and Government Hill neighborhoods were destroyed or heavily damaged from the
10 earthquake and landslides; the control tower at Anchorage International Airport collapsed,
11 killing one person; nine lives were lost; and many homes, buildings, streets, sidewalks, water
12 and sewer mains, telephone and electrical systems, and other infrastructure were damaged or
13 destroyed; and

14 **WHEREAS** a combination of seismic activity, postquake tsunamis, and fires
15 attributable to the earthquake and tsunamis significantly affected every coastal settlement on
16 Prince William Sound, the Kenai Peninsula, and Kodiak Island; and

17 **WHEREAS** a massive underwater landslide at Port Valdez and the accompanying
18 tsunamis killed at least 30 people, caused the collapse and destruction of the city harbor and
19 docks, set a fuel tank afire, and resulted in almost complete destruction of the town; and

20 **WHEREAS**, in Seward, the ground beneath the port liquefied and two tsunamis
21 struck and washed waves of flaming oil throughout the town; lives were lost, some residential
22 areas were lost or damaged, and the port lost its waterfront and industrial area including the
23 southern terminus of the Alaska Railroad; and

24 **WHEREAS**, when a 27-foot tsunami hit the village of Chenega, 23 of approximately
25 68 residents, including many young children, were killed, and only one building was left
26 standing; and

27 **WHEREAS** tsunamis washed away the villages of Old Harbor, Afognak, and
28 Kaguyak, along with several remote cabins and some of their occupants; and

29 **WHEREAS** coastal towns, including Kodiak, Whittier, and Homer, suffered loss of
30 life, loss of their waterfront industries, and loss of their fishing fleets; and

31 **WHEREAS** the communities of Portage and Girdwood were destroyed and about 20

1 miles of the Seward Highway sank below the high-tide mark of Turnagain Arm; and

2 **WHEREAS** other Alaska communities and areas of British Columbia, Oregon, and
3 California suffered the effects of the earthquake and tsunamis, and Hawaii and Japan were
4 also affected; and

5 **WHEREAS** the earthquake caused estimated damages of between \$300,000,000 and
6 \$500,000,000, the equivalent of between \$2,290,000,000 and \$3,700,000,000 in 2014 dollars;
7 and

8 **WHEREAS** thousands of aftershocks continued to strike the region after the main
9 event; 11 of the aftershocks had a magnitude of 6.0 or greater and occurred on the first day;
10 nine more aftershocks of a magnitude of 6.0 or greater occurred over the next three weeks;
11 and it was more than a year after the initial earthquake before the aftershocks that occurred
12 were no longer measurable; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaskans are a special breed of people who, throughout history, have
14 demonstrated tenacity and resilience in times of hardship; and

15 **WHEREAS** many professional first responders and ordinary Alaskans risked their
16 lives and personal safety to aid those in need, despite the tremendous dangers posed by
17 aftershocks, accompanying tsunamis, landslides, and the instability of collapsed structures and
18 land; and

19 **WHEREAS**, in countless situations, neighbors gave shelter to neighbors; villagers
20 shared their meager food supplies with each other; business owners donated goods,
21 equipment, and facilities; friends and strangers alike offered comfort; and the students of East
22 High School in Anchorage shared their building with rival West High School in Anchorage
23 until West High School could be repaired; and

24 **WHEREAS** Alaskans rallied in the aftermath of the devastation, relocating,
25 rebuilding, and regaining their homes, their businesses, and their lives; and

26 **WHEREAS** much has been learned about earthquakes and tsunamis and their
27 consequences as a result of this event; the knowledge gained has led to safer construction
28 practices, the establishment of early warning systems, and lives saved throughout the world;
29 and

30 **WHEREAS** March 27, 2014, is the 50th anniversary of the Great Alaska Earthquake,
31 a momentous event in the history of the state;

1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims March 27, 2014, to
2 be the Great Alaska Earthquake Day in recognition of those who lost their lives, suffered
3 injuries and losses, came to the rescue in the time of crisis, and participated in the recovery
4 and reconstruction of the areas of the state affected by the Great Alaska earthquake and the
5 resulting tsunamis.