

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR BISHOP

Introduced: 2/19/24

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

- 1 **Urging the American Museum of Natural History to repatriate the Childs Frick-Alaska**
2 **Quaternary Mammal Collection to Alaska.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the Childs Frick-Alaska Quaternary Mammal Collection, consisting of
5 animal bones collected by Otto Geist on land in and around Fairbanks, represents a valuable
6 scientific resource for understanding the natural history and ecological dynamics of the state;
7 and

8 **WHEREAS** the collection is currently held by the American Museum of Natural
9 History, an institution dedicated to scientific research, education, and the preservation of
10 cultural and natural heritage; and

11 **WHEREAS**, in a letter dated April 14, 1954, Childs Frick of the American Museum
12 of Natural History stated the intention to return the collection to the state, acknowledging the
13 significance of the collection to the state; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 2001, an agreement was reached among the American Museum of
15 Natural History, the University of Alaska Museum of the North, and a representative of the
16 Fairbanks Gold Co., LLC, stipulating the return of the collection to the state; and

1 **WHEREAS**, as of 2024, the agreement has still not been honored, depriving
2 researchers and scientists in the state access to this invaluable scientific resource; and

3 **WHEREAS** the unopened crates of bones within the collection hold the potential for
4 further discovery and scientific advancement in fields that include paleontology, ecology, and
5 anthropology and provide unique insights into the state's prehistoric and modern ecosystems
6 and climate;

7 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the American Museum of
8 Natural History to honor the agreement made in 2001 and expedite the return of the Childs
9 Frick-Alaska Quaternary Mammal Collection to the state in accordance with the intentions
10 expressed by Childs Frick in 1954; and be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the importance
12 of ensuring access to this valuable scientific resource for researchers, educators, and students
13 in the state to conduct studies and analyses that contribute to the advancement of scientific
14 knowledge and understanding of the state's natural history; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature calls on the leadership of
16 the American Museum of Natural History to express the state's strong support for the prompt
17 return of the Childs Frick-Alaska Quaternary Mammal Collection to the state; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** the Alaska State Legislature encourages collaboration
19 among the American Museum of Natural History, the University of Alaska Museum of the
20 North, Fairbanks Gold Co., LLC, and other relevant institutions and stakeholders in the state
21 to facilitate the repatriation process and ensure responsible stewardship of these artifacts.

22 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Pat Pitney, President,
23 University of Alaska; Scott L. Bok, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the American Museum
24 of Natural History; Sean M. Decatur, President of the American Museum of Natural History;
25 John Reeves, owner of Fairbanks Gold Co., LLC; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
26 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative,
27 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.