

Introduced: 3/29/72  
Referred: State Affairs

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY THE RULES COMMITTEE

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 127

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

Relating to land selection rights

6

under the Alaska Statehood Act.

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

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WHEREAS on January 3, 1959, Alaska was formally admitted into the Union

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on an equal footing with the other states; and

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WHEREAS, under the terms of the Alaska Statehood Act, the state was granted the right to select 103 million acres of land, to have and to hold on behalf of all her people; and

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WHEREAS, although Alaska was granted 25 years within which to select the acreage it desired, the Secretary of the Interior, eight years after statehood, imposed a "land freeze", thereby delaying further implementation of that portion of the Statehood Act; and

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WHEREAS the restriction on further land selection affected the growth of Alaska's economic base and denied its people the freedom and dignity that the sovereignty granted by statehood was to accomplish; and

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WHEREAS the recent passage of the Native Claims Settlement Act by the United States Congress had the salutary effect of removing the so-called "land freeze", allowing the state to continue the implementation of the Statehood Act; and

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WHEREAS on January 21, 1972 Governor William A. Egan announced the selection of all but a small portion of the balance of the 103 million acres the state is entitled to; and

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WHEREAS the Alaska Legislature through House Joint Resolution No. 90 expressed their support and approval of the Governor's forthright and timely action, and requested that the Department of Interior consult and confer with

1 the appropriate officials of the State of Alaska before making any final  
2 decisions regarding the lands to be withdrawn under the Native Claims Settle-  
3 ment Act; and

4 WHEREAS, Secretary of the Interior, Rogers C. B. Morton, issued various  
5 public land orders (P.L.O. 5169 - 5188) on March 16, 1972 withdrawing approxi-  
6 mately 180 million acres of land in Alaska from selection by the state and  
7 from appropriation under the public land laws; and

8 WHEREAS approximately 40 million acres of these withdrawals established  
9 areas for in-lieu land selection by native village and regional corporations  
10 as directed by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; and

11 WHEREAS, the withdrawal of these areas for native selection rightly  
12 gives a preferred right of selection to Alaska native corporations within  
13 these areas, and this preference right was expressly acknowledged in all the  
14 state's land selection applications filed on January 21, 1972; and

15 WHEREAS, Secretary Morton also withdrew on March 16, 1972, 80 million  
16 acres of land in Alaska for possible reservation as national parks, national  
17 wildlife refuges, national forests, and wild and scenic rivers, and these  
18 withdrawals failed to recognize the priority of certain applications for  
19 state selection which were filed on January 21, 1972, covering some of this  
20 acreage; and

21 WHEREAS, Secretary Morton also withdrew approximately 47 million acres  
22 of land in Alaska for other special uses, and that these withdrawals also  
23 failed to recognize the priority of certain applications for state selection  
24 which were filed on January 21, 1972, covering some of this acreage; and

25 WHEREAS, Secretary Morton also withdrew all lands not selected by  
26 native corporations in areas withdrawn for native in-lieu selection, a  
27 remainder of approximately 26 million acres, thereby making this land  
28 unavailable for future state selection or appropriation under the public  
29 land laws, and failing to recognize a priority second only to native selection

1 of certain applications for state selection which were filed on January 21,  
2 1972; and

3 WHEREAS, Secretary Morton also withdrew, for a period of four years or  
4 more, all lands not selected by native corporations from the lands with-  
5 drawn by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act around native villages, a  
6 remainder of approximately 11 million acres, thereby making this land  
7 unavailable for future state selection or appropriation under the public  
8 land laws for at least four years;

9 BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska Legislature that its members once again  
10 express their support and approval of Governor William A. Egan's action in  
11 selecting the lands to which we have been entitled; and be it

12 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Legislature condemns the orders for  
13 the withdrawals of lands in Alaska by Secretary of Interior Rogers C. B.  
14 Morton which purport to deny the State of Alaska the right to select certain  
15 lands to which we are entitled under the Alaska Statehood Act.

16 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Richard M.  
17 Nixon, President of the United States; the Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton,  
18 Secretary, Department of the Interior; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and  
19 the Honorable Mike Gravel, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nick Begich,  
20 U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

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