

BY REP. MENARD, Navarre, Swackhammer, Larson, Wallis, Hudson

1 IN THE HOUSE

2

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

Relating to spruce bark beetle infesta-

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tion.

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

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WHEREAS the spruce bark beetle had infested at least 1,450,000 acres  
9 of spruce forests in the state by December 1988; and

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WHEREAS the infestation has spread through 775,000 acres of state  
11 land, 275,000 acres of Native land, and 400,000 acres of federal land in  
12 the state; and

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WHEREAS the spruce bark beetles have seriously infested an estimated  
14 3,000,000,000 board feet of timber on 500,000 acres of land on the Kenai  
15 Peninsula and created an extremely hazardous risk of forest fire and threat  
16 to life and property; and

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WHEREAS an interagency task force of federal, state, and Kenai Borough  
18 natural resource officials have proposed opening five half-mile-wide fire-  
19 breaks in the Kenai River Canyon; and

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WHEREAS major recreation sites on the Kenai Peninsula, including the  
21 Russian River campground and the Resurrection Trail, may be closed for the  
22 summer due to extremely hazardous fire conditions; and

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WHEREAS most of the trees on the land on the upper Kenai Peninsula  
24 have suffered more than a 90 percent mortality and old growth stands near  
25 Kachemak Bay have suffered a 60 percent loss; and

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WHEREAS, in heavily infested stands statewide, over 80 percent of the  
27 white spruce trees have been killed; and

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WHEREAS an estimated 10,000,000,000 board feet of commercially har-  
29 vestable and valuable timber is now dead or dying as a result of the spruce

1 bark beetle infestation; and

2 WHEREAS proper forest management, including the harvest of overmature,  
3 diseased, dying, damaged, and windblown trees and provision to leave strips  
4 between clearcut or shelterwood cutting areas of more than 100 feet would  
5 significantly reduce the risk of forest fires and the spread of the in-  
6 festation; and

7 WHEREAS proper forest management and harvesting would generate jobs  
8 for many residents of the state;

9 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports the actions  
10 of the Spruce Bark Beetle Interagency Task Force to ensure the safety of  
11 life and property on the Kenai Peninsula by developing an emergency re-  
12 sponse to combat the spruce bark beetle infestation; and be it

13 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State legislature urges that the  
14 efforts of the Interagency Task Force be broadened to include other cities  
15 and boroughs that may be affected by the infestation and that alternatives  
16 for the reduction of the fire danger and the prevention of epidemic out-  
17 breaks of spruce bark beetle infestation in other areas of the state be  
18 undertaken.

19 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Lennie  
20 Gorsuch, Commissioner of Natural Resources; the Honorable Don W.  
21 Collinsworth, Commissioner of Fish and Game; to M.R. "Bob" Dick, State  
22 Forester; to Michael Barton, Regional Forester, United States Forest Ser-  
23 vice; to Peggy Fox, Supervisor of the Chugach National Forest; to Don  
24 Gilman, Mayor of the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and to Dorothy Jones, Mayor  
25 of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.