

Original sponsor(s): REP. MENARD, Navarre, Swackhammer, Larson, Wallis,
Hudson, Zawacki, Kubina

1 IN THE HOUSE BY THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
2 CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45 (Resources)

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
4 SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 Relating to spruce bark beetle infesta-
6 tion.

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

8 WHEREAS the spruce bark beetle currently infests at least 177,000
9 acres of spruce forests throughout Southcentral and Interior Alaska; and

10 WHEREAS in 1989 the infestation covered 83,345 acres of state land and
11 private land, 10,694 acres of national forest land, and 83,210 acres of
12 other Federal land in the state; and

13 WHEREAS since approximately 1974, spruce bark beetles have seriously
14 infested an estimated 3,000,000,000 board feet of timber on 500,000 acres
15 of land on the Kenai Peninsula and created an extremely hazardous risk of
16 forest fire and threat to life and property; and

17 WHEREAS an interagency task force of federal, state, and Kenai Borough
18 natural resource officials have proposed opening five 500-foot fuel breaks
19 in the Kenai River Canyon; and

20 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

23 WHEREAS most of the trees in the Cooper Landing and the Russian River
24 area have suffered more than a 90 percent mortality; and

25 WHEREAS an estimated 10,000,000,000 board feet of valuable timber is
26 now dead or dying as a result of the spruce bark beetle infestation in the
27 last 70 years; and

28 WHEREAS proper forest management, including the harvest of overmature,
29 diseased, dying, damaged, and windblown trees, would significantly reduce

1 the risk of forest fires, the spread of the infestation, and would generate
2 jobs for many residents of the state;

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

7 FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges that the
8 efforts of the Interagency Task Force be broadened to include other cities
9 and boroughs that may be affected by the infestation and that alternatives
10 for the reduction of the fire danger and the prevention of epidemic out-
11 breaks of spruce bark beetle infestation in susceptible stands in other
12 areas of the state be undertaken.

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