

BY M.DAVIS, FOSTER,
KOPONEN, BROWN AND
NAVARRE

1 IN THE HOUSE

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 28

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Relating to the Beringia International

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Biosphere Reserve.

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

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WHEREAS the state has made a commitment to increasing Alaska-Soviet cooperation in trade, tourism, and international goodwill; and

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WHEREAS former President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev agreed in principle at the 1987 Summit to encourage expanded contacts, cooperation, and bilateral agreements on issues relating to the Arctic, including cooperation of scientific research and management of the region's natural resources; and

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WHEREAS the area of the Bering Strait region once formed a land bridge between Siberia and Alaska, and today is the meeting place of continents; and

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WHEREAS the effects of the connection between Siberia and Alaska are seen throughout the Beringian region in fossils of plants and animals, polar bears, migratory birds and marine mammals who roam freely from one continent to the other, in the artifacts of ancient peoples and present Eskimo family ties, and in commercial fishermen who share the same resources; and

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WHEREAS a Beringia Natural Heritage Program has been proposed that would foster greater mutual understanding and cooperation between the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. and this program includes as a goal the designation of a biosphere reserve in the area; and

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WHEREAS the purpose of a biosphere reserve is to have people cooperate in solving resource problems, share knowledge, improve management of

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1 natural resources, monitor natural and human-caused changes, perpetuate and
2 learn from traditional forms of land use, and conserve biological resources
3 that are of unique and outstanding value; and

4 WHEREAS biosphere reserves, as part of a global network, encourage
5 international participation and scientific research, and are multipurpose,
6 and such a designation would be a symbolic recognition of the shared
7 Beringian heritage; and

8 WHEREAS local people benefit from biosphere reserves from protection
9 of basic resources, improved land management skills, a more productive and
10 diverse economic base, additional employment, more influence in land-use
11 decisions, and continued opportunities to maintain their existing ways of
12 living; and

13 WHEREAS similar environments and resources should encourage close
14 working relationships and communications and scientists of both nations
15 have already managed joint expeditions, studies, and symposia that have
16 contributed to international stewardship; and

17 WHEREAS further cooperative efforts would include a sharing of techni-
18 cal and planning data, exchanges of scientific and technical experts,
19 joint, multidisciplinary study teams, and student and volunteer exchanges;
20 and

21 WHEREAS the Beringian region consists of land in the already existing
22 Noatak and Bering Land Bridge National Preserves that could serve as the
23 land base for the Alaska side of the biosphere reserve and the Chukotsk
24 Peninsula on the Soviet side, and portions of the Bering Sea joining the
25 Alaska and Soviet portions and such a designation would simply be an over-
26 lay on other existing land uses; and

27 WHEREAS because of similar environments, shared migratory wildlife,
28 and human histories intertwined from earliest times, the U.S. and Soviet
29 segments of Beringia form a natural and cultural entity;

1 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports continued
2 work with the Governor and the people of the Magadan Territory towards the
3 designation of the Beringia International Biosphere Reserve due to its
4 extremely rich and unique biological and cultural resources.

5 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush,
6 President of the United States; to the Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secre-
7 tary of the Interior; to William Mott, Director of the National Park Ser-
8 vice; to Boyd Evison, Regional Director of the National Park Service,
9 Anchorage; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank
10 Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
11 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.