

1 IN THE SENATE

BY COGHILL

2

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 36

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

Requesting the Congress to reserve a

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highway corridor or setback along the

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east shoreline of Lynn Canal.

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

9 WHEREAS, of all the continental states of the United States, Alaska's  
10 capital, Juneau, is the only one that is not connected by highway to the  
11 rest of the state, denying most Alaskans direct land access to the seat of  
12 government; and

13 WHEREAS there is currently pending in the Alaska State Legislature  
14 legislation that would authorize and appropriate money for the construction  
15 of the Lynn Canal Highway Project, consisting of a highway and shuttle  
16 ferry facilities, linking Juneau with Haines and Skagway; and

17 WHEREAS, in addition to improving direct land access to the seat of  
18 government, the Lynn Canal Highway Project is important to the economies of  
19 the communities of Lynn Canal because it would enhance diversity of the  
20 economies of these communities; and

21 WHEREAS the proposed highway would pass through highly mineralized  
22 areas that are currently being developed into operating mines; and

23 WHEREAS it is estimated that opening the Lynn Canal Highway would  
24 precipitate a four-fold increase in visitor traffic between Juneau and the  
25 communities of Upper Lynn Canal; and

26 WHEREAS completion of the Lynn Canal Highway Project would allow the  
27 Alaska Marine Highway System to terminate its mainline ferries at Juneau  
28 and thereby allow for improved ferry services to the remaining communities  
29 served by ferry in Southeastern Alaska; and

1       WHEREAS the proposed Lynn Canal Highway Project would qualify for  
2 federal matching funds for its construction; and

3       WHEREAS the proposed highway route of the Lynn Canal Highway Project  
4 would pass almost entirely through federal and state lands, requiring  
5 almost no purchase of private property; and

6       WHEREAS a federally-designated wilderness area has been proposed for  
7 the headwaters of Berners Bay that, if approved, would incorporate part of  
8 the route of the Lynn Canal Highway Project; and

9       WHEREAS the proposed wilderness area would work an extreme hardship on  
10 the developing hardrock mines in the area, as well as precluding potential  
11 timber, fishery, tourism, and travel activities of the private sector; and

12       WHEREAS, at the time of withdrawal of lands for designation of wilder-  
13 ness area within the Tongass National Forest known as the Endicott River  
14 Wilderness area, Congress established a six-mile corridor or setback along  
15 the west side of Lynn Canal for future economic and access needs; and

16       WHEREAS, because the Lynn Canal Highway Project proposes a highway on  
17 the east side of Lynn Canal, the west side corridor is not appropriate for  
18 the needs of the project; and

19       WHEREAS a similar corridor or setback along the east side of Lynn  
20 Canal would assist development of the Lynn Canal Highway Project;

21       BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature asks the United  
22 States Congress, in its deliberations relating to the Tongass National  
23 Forest, to set aside a two-mile corridor or setback along the shoreline of  
24 the east side of Lynn Canal, to be reserved specifically for a highway,  
25 utility right-of-way, and related facilities, and to promote private sector  
26 economic development activities.

27       COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George Bush,  
28 President of the United States; the Honorable Dan Quayle, Vice-President of  
29 the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Jim

1 Wright, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable George  
2 J. Mitchell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Samuel K.  
3 Skinner, U.S. Secretary of Transportation; the Honorable Robert A.  
4 Mosbacher, U.S. Secretary of Commerce; the Honorable Clayton K. Yeutter,  
5 U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; and the Honorable Manuel Lujan, Jr., U.S.  
6 Secretary of the Interior; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honor-  
7 able Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.  
8 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.