

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

EIGHTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 5/2/94

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC TASK FORCE

A RESOLUTION

**1 Relating to the importance to the economy of Southeast Alaska of continued
2 timber harvests on the Tongass National Forest.**

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

**4 WHEREAS the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the
5 Tongass Land Management Plan define multiple use objectives for the Tongass National
6 Forest; and**

**7 WHEREAS, according to the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, national
8 forest land is to be managed for a sustainable yield of various resources including water, fish,
9 wildlife, and timber; and**

**10 WHEREAS the Tongass Land Management Plan is currently undergoing revision to
11 see how these goals are being met and to provide direction for meeting these goals in the
12 future; and**

**13 WHEREAS regeneration on harvested land in the Tongass National Forest has
14 demonstrated that second growth yields can reach the 23,000 board feet per acre necessary to
15 sustain a harvest of 450,000,000 board feet per year as designated in the Tongass Land
16 Management Plan; and**

1 **WHEREAS**, in recent years, timber sales on the Tongass National Forest have been
2 significantly reduced so that far less than 450,000,000 board feet are available; and

3 **WHEREAS** the economy of Southeast Alaska utilizes resources of the Tongass for
4 commercial fisheries, recreation, tourism, mining, and timber harvest; and

5 **WHEREAS** the economy of Southeast Alaska is stable, has enabled the use of long-
6 term bond financing for public service, and has attracted significant private capital investment;
7 and

8 **WHEREAS** the timber industry of Southeast Alaska was developed based upon an
9 expected annual harvest level of 450,000,000 board feet; and

10 **WHEREAS** Tongass National Forest timber resources accounted for about 2,500 of
11 the annual average 3,600 private sector jobs directly generated by the forest products industry
12 in Southeast Alaska in 1992, the last year for which accurate figures are available; and

13 **WHEREAS** the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska accounted for 24 percent
14 of basic industry employment (including government), and 34 percent of all private basic
15 industry employment, in 1992; and

16 **WHEREAS** workers in the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska, including
17 loggers, road builders, stevedores, sawmill workers, and pulp mill workers earned
18 approximately \$146,000,000 in wages and salaries during 1992; and

19 **WHEREAS** forest products industry employment in Southeast Alaska has declined
20 sharply since 1990, marked by the loss of \$18,000,000 in payroll and more than 600 jobs, due
21 to reduced timber harvests on the Tongass and the near completion of the first harvest on
22 private land; and

23 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress in 1980 enacted the Alaska National Interest
24 Lands Conservation Act, which includes provisions designating 5,400,000 acres of the Tongass
25 National Forest as part of the Wilderness Preservation System, and thus closed that land to
26 timber harvest; and

27 **WHEREAS** an increase in the availability of timber for harvest on the Tongass
28 National Forest could offset the lack of production of timber from private land and maintain
29 the economic well-being of Southeast Alaska; and

30 **WHEREAS** a decline in the availability of timber to harvest on the Tongass National
31 Forest will continue to cause the loss of jobs in the timber industry in Southeast Alaska and
32 will significantly impair the economic well-being of the area as many communities are totally

1 or otherwise very dependent on the timber industry as the sole or one of the largest employers
2 in the community; and

3 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress in 1990 enacted the Tongass Timber Reform
4 Act, thus closing an additional 1,100,000 acres of land to timber harvest through wilderness
5 designations and management practices; and

6 **WHEREAS** timber availability is critical to the health of the forest products industry
7 in Alaska, and the availability of timber in the Tongass National Forest will likely determine
8 the future of the forest products industry in Alaska; and

9 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress controls the level of timber harvesting in the
10 Tongass in part through the budget process and by these land designations acts; and

11 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, manages the
12 Tongass National Forest and determines the availability of timber for harvest on the land not
13 closed to timber harvest;

14 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United
15 States Congress to review the economic impact on the Southeast Alaska economy and the
16 forest products industry of the wilderness designations imposed by the Alaska National Interest
17 Lands Conservation Act of 1980, and the wilderness designations and changes in management
18 practices mandated by the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
20 United States Congress to increase the amount of timber available for harvest in the Tongass
21 National Forest; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
23 United States Congress to provide sufficient funding to the United States Department of
24 Agriculture, Forest Service, to facilitate offering for harvest the maximum amount of Tongass
25 timber possible under current law while recognizing and protecting other resource values; and
26 be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests the United States
28 Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, to manage the Tongass National Forest in order
29 to provide maximum opportunity for timber harvest under current law while recognizing and
30 protecting other resource values.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the
32 United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President

1 of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the U.S. House of
2 Representatives; the Honorable George Mitchell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the
3 Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the
4 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska Delegation in Congress;
5 and to Mr. Michael Espy, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Jack Ward
6 Thomas, Chief of the U. S. Forest Service.