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FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 3/2/90
Title: Constitutional Amendment:
Subsistence
Sponsor: Rules Committee
Requestor: Governor

Agency Affected: Dept. of Fish and Game
BRU: _____
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0

CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
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REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

No FY 90 impact.

Prepared by: Molly McCammon
Division: Commissioner's/Office/
Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
Agency: _____

Phone: 465-4100
Date: 3/1/90
Date: 2 28 90

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

STEVE COWPER
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

7-12-88

March 2, 1990

The Honorable Sam Cotten
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Mr. Speaker:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Alaska Constitution to give rural residents a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife.

In Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act ("ANILCA"), P.L. 96-487, 94 Stat. 2371, 2422 (1980), the United States Congress established a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife by rural residents on federal land, and provided that the priority would be implemented by the secretaries of interior and agriculture unless the state enacted legislation affording the same priority. In ch. 52, SLA 1986, the legislature gave rural residents a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife. The legislature enacted ch. 52, in part, to prevent a federal takeover of fish and wildlife management on federal land, an action with which I wholeheartedly agree.

In McDowell v. State, 785 P.2d 1 (1989), however, the Alaska Supreme Court held that a subsistence priority for rural residents violates the Alaska Constitution. This raises the distinct possibility that the state will lose management of fish and wildlife on federal land and, conceivably, state-wide. Such a result is simply unacceptable. It also means that the state might find it difficult, if not impossible, to ensure that rural residents most reliant on fish and wildlife have the necessary opportunities to take those resources when needed.

Section one of the joint resolution would add a new section to art. VIII of the Alaska Constitution to ensure that the constitution does not prohibit (1) a subsistence priority for rural residents, and (2) the allocation of fish and wildlife for subsistence uses on the basis of local or community residence, availability of alternative resources,

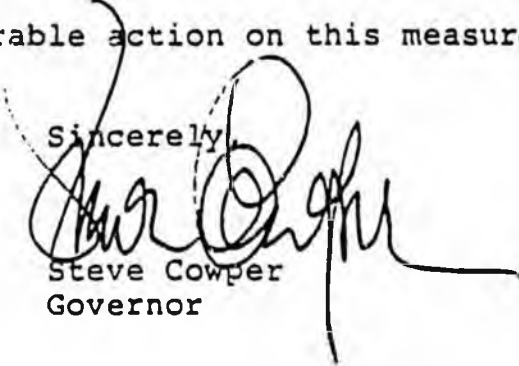
and customary and direct dependence on a fish or game population as a mainstay of livelihood. This would give the legislature clear constitutional authority to enact laws that are consistent with the subsistence provisions of ANILCA.

Section 2 of the joint resolution would validate, ratify, and reinstate those provisions enacted by ch. 52, SLA 1986, held invalid by the Alaska Supreme Court in the McDowell decision. While the court declared that those provisions were inconsistent with the constitution as it read at the time of the decision, they have not been repealed by the legislature nor declared void in a final court judgment. (In any event, while there is a presumption that a constitutional amendment is not retrospective, case law from this and other jurisdictions makes clear that an amendment will have retroactive effect if such an intent is clearly expressed, as here. See Mathews v. Quinton, 362 P.2d, 932, 938 -- 939 [Alaska 1961].) By reinstating and ratifying the provisions of the 1986 law, the state would be back in the same position it was in before the McDowell decision, but with the certainty that the provisions of the 1986 law are constitutional.

Section 3 of the joint resolution is, essentially, the standard language directing the lieutenant governor to place the proposed constitutional amendment, including the statement of intended effect, before the voters in a single ballot proposition at the next general election.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,



Steve Cowper
Governor

NEWS RELEASE

STATE OF ALASKA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. BOX A
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811

STEVE COWPER,
GOVERNOR



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DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY

(907) 465-3500

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 1990
No. 90-40

COWPER INTRODUCES SUBSISTENCE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

JUNEAU--Gov. Steve Cowper today is introducing a joint resolution in both houses of the state legislature that would give rural Alaska residents a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife.

The resolution would amend the state constitution to authorize a subsistence priority for rural residents. In determining subsistence eligibility, the amendment would allow the state to consider where a person lives, what the availability of alternative resources is, and whether subsistence is the customary and primary livelihood of people in the area.

"We've considered a whole gamut of options, from completely restructuring our fish and game management system to challenging federal subsistence law in court," Cowper said. "We've concluded that a constitutional amendment is the only practical way we can guarantee that Alaskans who depend on a subsistence way of life won't be deprived of access to fish and game."

The resolution must pass by a two-thirds majority vote in both the House and Senate before appearing on November's general election ballot for voter approval.

In 1980, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) mandating a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife on federal lands by rural residents. ANILCA also set out that the federal government would take over management of fish and game resources on federal lands in Alaska if the state did not pass similar legislation giving rural residents subsistence priority.

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In 1986, Alaska's legislature passed subsistence legislation giving rural residents preference when resources are scarce, thus preventing a federal takeover of fish and wildlife management on federal lands in Alaska.

Last December, in *McDowell v. State*, the Alaska Supreme Court declared that law unconstitutional, thereby jeopardizing the state's authority to manage fish and wildlife on federal lands and perhaps throughout the state. That ruling also would make it difficult, if not impossible, for the state to ensure that Alaskans who depend on fish and wildlife the most have the necessary opportunity to take those resources.

"Although we've asked the Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling on subsistence, it's unlikely the court will reverse itself," Cowper said. "The current subsistence situation is unacceptable. Alaska has to be able to manage its own fish and wildlife resources. Otherwise, the federal government would be making decisions about the allocation of our resources and how people here should live their lives. Alaskans know what's best for Alaskans and I believe we need to stand together to protect our citizens' rights through a constitutional amendment."

The joint resolution introduced today would add a new section to Article VIII of the state constitution ensuring that the constitution does not prohibit:

- a subsistence priority for rural residents; and
- the allocation of fish and wildlife for subsistence uses on the basis of local or community residence, availability of alternative resources, and customary and direct dependence on a fish or game population as a mainstay of livelihood.

In addition, the resolution would reinstate the provisions of the 1986 subsistence law ruled unconstitutional by the state Supreme Court in December. That would put subsistence back in the same position it was before the Supreme Court decision in the *McDowell* case. The resolution also directs the lieutenant governor to place the proposed constitutional amendment before voters in November's general election.

Last month, the Alaska Federation of Natives adopted a policy position supporting a similar constitutional amendment giving subsistence preference to rural residents.

A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT ESTABLISHING
A SUBSISTENCE PRIORITY FOR RURAL ALASKANS

Position paper prepared by
Alaska Department of Fish and Game
and
Alaska Department of Law

March 7, 1990

I. The problem

On December 22, 1989 the Alaska Supreme Court issued a decision in McDowell v. State that the rural preference in the state subsistence law was unconstitutional. This ruling makes it constitutionally impossible for Alaska to enact a law consistent with Title VIII of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). That section makes federal officials responsible for providing a preference for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife by rural residents on federal public lands unless, in laws of general applicability, the state provides for such uses.

Without a solution to the problem created by the McDowell decision, management of fish and wildlife will be conducted both by the federal and the state governments. This will undoubtedly lead to conflicts over the allowable uses of fish and wildlife and take many of the decisions out of the hands of Alaskans and give them to the federal government. The state was granted a stay by the Supreme Court until July 1 with respect to existing regulations only.

II. Objectives to be achieved in any solution

We believe that any solution must meet the following objectives:

The state must retain its traditional role as manager of the fish and wildlife resources in Alaska in order to ensure the continued health and viability of those resources, as well as to make sure management of the resources is responsive to the needs of Alaskans.

There should be a priority for subsistence uses of fish and wildlife by those Alaskans who most rely on such uses, the majority of whom live in rural areas of the state.

The greatest certainty and predictability must be given to all fish and wildlife users, requiring that potential management conflicts between state and federal management agencies be minimized.

III. Review process

In the two months since the ruling, the administration has received comments from a wide range of interested and affected Alaskans, reviewed a number of recommended solutions, and met with a variety of user groups including Alaska Native organizations, commercial fishing organizations, and sportsmen and outdoor groups. Since allocation of Alaska's fish and wildlife resources touches nearly everyone in the state, the administration has kept an open mind in reviewing all proposed solutions. For that reason, a great deal of time has been spent in reviewing the legal parameters of the court ruling and all such proposals.

IV. Options suggested

* Ask the Alaska Supreme Court to reconsider its decision in McDowell.

The state requested a rehearing of the supreme court's decision, arguing that the court overlooked or misconceived several legal principles and material facts. That request for rehearing has been denied.

* Amend the Alaska Constitution to authorize a subsistence priority for rural residents.

Since this is the preferred option chosen by Governor Cowper, it will be discussed in more detail in sections V and VI of this paper.

* Amend ANILCA to eliminate the federal subsistence priority for rural residents.

The administration rejected this approach primarily because it does not have the support of either the Alaska Congressional delegation or the Alaska Native community, both of which would be essential for any amendment to pass Congress. ANILCA was crafted as a compromise which balanced a number of competing interests. Amending it would require an agreement among the state, the Alaska Native community, and the Alaska Congressional delegation at the very minimum. In addition, in the 1978 subsistence statute, throughout the ANILCA legislative process, in the 1982 statewide ballot referendum, and in the 1986 subsistence statute the state has continually supported A subsistence priority FOR rural residents.

* Amend ANILCA to preempt state law as necessary to grant rural residents a subsistence priority statewide.

Under this scenario, we would ask Congress to apply the supremacy clause and require the state to give rural residents a subsistence priority statewide, despite the constitutional problems addressed by the Alaska Supreme Court in McDowell. Because of state sovereignty principles, this was not considered to be an option that the state should willingly support. Without state support, it is probably not politically attainable.

* Amend state law to provide a subsistence priority to state residents most dependent on fish and wildlife, as determined through some kind of individualized permitting system, and then amend ANILCA to conform to the state law.

This option was initially suggested by Governor Cowper early in the debate on how to resolve the dilemma posed by the supreme court's ruling. State officials went to great lengths to attempt to develop a system that would be consistent with the state constitution. The tentative proposal was for a three-member Subsistence Commission with powers and authorities similar to the Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission to determine who was a "subsistence user," using a set of criteria for making those determinations. This option was eventually rejected because 1) it would be extremely burdensome and intrusive on those Alaskans it was intended to protect; 2) it would create a large, cumbersome bureaucracy with a cost of many millions of dollars a year; 3) it was estimated that at least 100,000 individual determinations would need to be made, all of them subject to appeals and litigation; 4) it would require a minimum of three to four years to establish such a system and make the initial determinations; and 5) there was a serious question whether such a system would be consistent with the Alaska Constitution as interpreted in McDowell.

In addition, this approach would still result in state law being inconsistent with the subsistence preference provisions of ANILCA, in the absence of an amendment to ANILCA, already determined to be unattainable. This create an unacceptable risk of a federal takeover of fish and wildlife management.

* Interpret section 804 of ANILCA as preempting state law on federal lands (as those may ultimately be defined by the courts), with implementation carried out by state officials.

State and federal attorneys agree that Congress intended the ANILCA subsistence priority for rural residents to apply on federal lands and to preempt conflicting state laws. A legal argument can be made that, under the supremacy clause of the United States Constitution, state officials can implement the ANILCA subsistence priority by rural residents on federal lands directly under ANILCA. On the other hand, it can be argued that state officials are bound by the state constitution and cannot implement a conflicting federal law.

Another uncertainty is the geographic scope of the ANILCA preference. "Public lands" are defined as "land situated in Alaska which, after the date of enactment of this Act, are Federal lands, except [valid state and Native corporation selections]." "Federal land" is defined as "lands the title to which is in the United States after the date of enactment of this Act." "Land" is defined as "lands, waters, and interests therein."

The possible geographic scope of the ANILCA preference under these definitions ranges from "narrow" (wildlife only when they are physically present on federal land, and fish only when in non-navigable waters on federal land) to "broad" (wildlife throughout their migratory range, even when not on federal land, and fish wherever they are in any waters of the state, including the territorial sea).

This option is not the preferred option for reasons in addition to the uncertainty over the geographical scope of ANILCA. Since the state would be acting under federal, as opposed to state authority, there would undoubtedly be litigation challenging the ability of the state to proceed directly under ANILCA. The more direct avenue is to amend the state constitution to allow state agencies to act directly under state law. However, the preemption option may provide a fallback position if the constitutional amendment fails.

* Seek cooperative agreements with the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture under which the ANILCA priority would be implemented by them, perhaps only through closure authority to avoid dual management of the resource.

It is clear that a failure by the state to give rural residents a subsistence priority, something which McDowell now says is impossible under the state constitution, would result in a federal takeover of fish and game management for subsistence uses on federal public lands. The Secretary of the Interior has made it clear he wishes to see the state resolve this issue in order to bring us into compliance with the provisions of ANILCA. One former Interior Department official believes that the Secretaries' authorities to implement a subsistence priority for rural residents on federal lands is limited under ANILCA to their authority to close the lands to the taking of fish and wildlife until the priority is satisfied. However, current Department of the Interior officials have also made it clear that they believe their authority to be much more expansive than mere closure authority.

This is an option that, of necessity, is being discussed with federal officials both for the time period between July 1 and the effective date of a constitutional amendment, and in the event an amendment does not pass the Legislature or the voters. Because it

easily could result in a federal takeover of fish and wildlife management however, it is not the preferred option.

* Use current management tools -- seasons, bag limits, same-day (or even two-day) airborne prohibitions, etc. -- creatively to benefit those most dependent on fish and wildlife.

Some people point to the fact that prior to the state's 1978 statute giving subsistence uses a priority, the Boards of Fisheries and Game had the authority to provide for subsistence uses using the traditional regulatory tools of methods and means. They argue that in order to make the state approach consistent with ANILCA, these traditional regulatory tools could be employed to explicitly favor rural residents. Any direct attempt by the boards to implement such a priority through regulations would be subject to the same constitutional challenge as the rural preference struck down in McDowell. In addition, ANILCA only stays the federal responsibility for providing the subsistence priority by rural residents on federal lands if the state has, in laws of general applicability, the same definition of and priority for subsistence as the federal law. Simply using traditional management tools would not satisfy that requirement of ANILCA, again running the risk of a federal takeover.

* Challenge the ANILCA subsistence priority for rural residents and/or Congress' power to require such a priority on constitutional grounds.

The administration does not support this option primarily because we support the rural subsistence preference contained in ANILCA and believe an attempt to challenge that priority is not warranted. Such a challenge would probably be based on the grounds that the ANILCA priority violates 1) equal protection, applicable to federal statutes under the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution, and 2) the statehood compact. With respect to the first argument, the federal constitution has a much more deferential equal protection test than the Alaska Constitution, and the state is not considered to have very strong legal arguments. With respect to the second argument, a unanimous United States Supreme Court ruled in 1976 that the federal government has the constitutional authority to regulate fish and wildlife on federal lands.

* Amend the Alaska Constitution to authorize a subsistence priority for Alaska Natives.

Although many of the rural residents who most rely on fish and wildlife for their economic and cultural well-being are Alaska Natives, there are also many non-Native rural residents who depend on the same fish and wildlife. The administration does not support

a Native only preference. Further, such a priority would not be consistent with ANILCA.

* Amend ANILCA to authorize a subsistence preference for Alaska Natives.

The same position as above applies to this option.

V. The administration's preferred approach

In McDowell, the Alaska Supreme Court struck down the state's subsistence priority for rural residents because it violated article VIII of the Alaska Constitution. It did not rely on any provisions of the federal constitution in striking down the subsistence priority for rural residents. Accordingly, the Alaska Constitution can be amended to make constitutional the subsistence priority by rural residents struck down in McDowell.

Amending the state constitution is the cleanest way to allow the state to again be consistent with ANILCA and provide a subsistence priority by rural residents. Such an amendment would ensure that the state would retain management of fish and wildlife on federal land, a goal which played a major role in the statehood movement. In addition, it would permit the state to ensure that rural residents most reliant on fish and wildlife have the necessary opportunities to take those resources when needed. The state has attempted to do so for more than 10 years now, only to be stymied by one court decision after another. By authorizing a subsistence priority for rural residents in the Alaska Constitution, the state would have clear authority to finally implement what has been state policy for more than a decade.

VI. Further Discussion and Considerations

A. The amendment and its effect

The governor has proposed a constitutional amendment which would authorize the limitation of subsistence uses of fish and wildlife to rural residents. Such uses already can be the subject of a priority under the current article VIII, section 4, which authorizes "preferences among beneficial uses." The proposed section 19 would be added to article VIII, and would read:

Nothing in this constitution prohibits the Legislature from limiting the taking of fish and wildlife for subsistence uses to rural residents, and from providing for the allocation of that taking among rural residents on the basis of local or community residents, availability of alternative resources, and customary and direct dependence on

a fish or game population as the mainstay of livelihood.

The wording of the proposed resolution makes clear that:

The intent of the amendment proposed by this resolution is to validate, ratify, and reinstate any provisions of [the 1986 state subsistence law] and of any regulations adopted [thereunder], which otherwise might have to be declared invalid under the Alaska Supreme Court's decision in McDowell v. State, 785 P.2d 1 (Alaska 1989), and to explicitly reverse the effect of the McDowell decision as to those provisions and regulations.

If this resolution passes the Legislature and in the November general election, the state would be authorized to have legislation consistent with ANILCA and the legislation which was enacted in 1986 would be validated retroactively, rather than requiring reenactment. The principle of retroactive validation is accepted in caselaw from other jurisdictions, and has been noted by the Alaska Supreme Court in Matthews v. Quinton, 362 P.2d 932, 938 (Alaska 1961).

B. What happens between July 1 and the general election?

If this resolution passes the Legislature, the state could ask the Alaska Supreme Court for an extension of the stay in McDowell until after the November general election results were certified. The justification for the request would be that, if the amendment does pass in the general election, the disruptions and start-up costs for a contingency plan which would only be effective from July 1 through the general election would not be in the best interests of the state.

The court may not be receptive to such a request, since in a February 26, 1990, order denying a request that the current stay be vacated, the court stated:

The stay entered on January 5, 1990, will expire on the close of business July 1, 1990. Extensions to the stay will not be granted.

The court may have been indicating that the state must face up to the consequences of the McDowell decision. The comment, however, was made in a context in which no party had asked for an extension of the stay. It is possible that if a constitutional amendment did pass the Legislature, the court might consider an extension. At the same time, we cannot rely on an extension of the stay. Thus, a contingency plan will have to be developed which would apply from July 1 until after the November election, in the

event the stay were not continued. The state is currently participating in the federal contingency planning process.

C. The amendment's relationship to the Kenaitze problem.

The proposed amendment only attempts to resolve the problem created by the supreme court's decision in McDowell, which conclusively precludes the state from having a law that is consistent with the definition of and priority for subsistence uses in ANILCA. This imminently threatens the unified management so necessary for the welfare of the fish and wildlife in Alaska and for those who use those resources. The proposed amendment does not attempt to address other subsistence issues, such as the inconsistency of the state's definition of "rural" and Congress's use of that term in ANILCA, as identified by the ninth circuit court of appeals in Kenaitze Indian Tribe v. State, 860 F.2d 312 (9th Cir. 1988).

In that case, the court held that the state's current definition of "rural area" found in AS 16.05.940(25) is not consistent with the use of the term "rural" in ANILCA. The state had defined "rural area" as:

a community or area of the state in which the noncommercial, customary, and traditional use of fish or game for personal or family consumption is a principal characteristic of the economy of the community or area.

The ninth circuit concluded that focusing on the economy of the community or area was not consistent with Congress's intent. It based its view on what it considered the "common sense" meaning of "rural" as being connected to population levels and densities. If the proposed constitutional amendment passes, it would not resolve the "rural" issue; unless the proposed constitutional amendment passes, however, the state cannot even attempt to achieve consistency between its definition of "rural" and the federal one.

Even if the McDowell decision had not been issued, it would still be premature to consider changing state law to define "rural" in a way which would be consistent with ANILCA. Although the ninth circuit said the state definition was not consistent, it did not say what the term "rural" in ANILCA meant, and gave the state no clear guidance as to how the state definition should be amended to make it consistent with ANILCA. The meaning of "rural" in the federal law is currently the subject of federal district court proceedings in the Kenaitze case. Until that litigation provides more guidance as to what would be consistent with ANILCA, it would be inappropriate to try to amend state law to match the federal law. At this point, of course, the state does not even

have the authority to define subsistence in terms of rural residents, quite apart from refining the "rural" definition.

If this constitutional amendment passes, the state will in the meanwhile have gathered more information about the scope of the term "rural" in ANILCA through the federal district court case. A reasoned decision can then be made whether the best course is to repeal the state definition, replace the state definition with another definition, or attempt to amend ANILCA to reflect the state definition in the federal law.

D. Severability

If the constitutional amendment validating the 1986 subsistence law does not pass, the ANILCA standards will apply to federal land in the state. However, what the rules would be for state and private lands depends on the question of severability.

Under McDowell, the limitation of the subsistence priority to only rural residents in the 1986 state law is invalid on state and private lands. However, the court did not decide whether the remainder of the 1986 law, including the priority of subsistence uses over other uses, is also invalid.

The basic question is whether the Legislature would have intended the subsistence mandate and priority to remain in effect if the class of subsistence users included all Alaskans. In that event, hunting by nonresidents and sport and commercial fishing would have to be eliminated before subsistence uses (open to all Alaskans) on any fish stock or game population could be cut back. (The subsistence uses would be subject to reasonable regulation, however, without requiring other uses be eliminated.)

If the Legislature would have intended that the rest of the law fall if the rural limitation were invalid, then the boards would not be required to authorize subsistence fishing and hunting (open to all Alaskans), and would not be required to give it a priority. The boards could in their discretion, however, authorize subsistence and give it a priority, in any given situation.

This question will probably be presented to the superior court when the case returns there from the supreme court.

STEVE COWPER
GOVERNOR



ac
7-18-88

STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

March 2, 1990

The Honorable Sam Cotten
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
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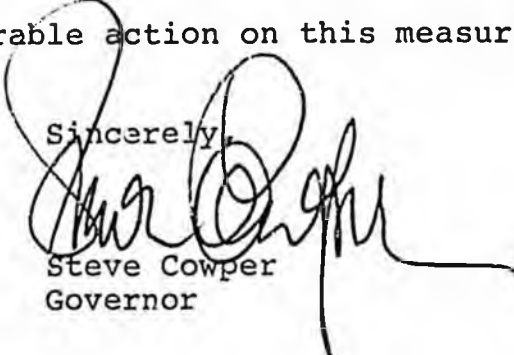
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Sincerely,



Steve Cowper
Governor