

HJR

31

<TARGET><BILL>HJR 31</BILL><SUBJECT>HJR
31</SUBJECT><COMM>HRES27</COMM></TARGET>

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 31

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES JOHANSEN, Fairclough, Olson, Millett, Feige, Chenault

Introduced: 1/23/12

Referred: Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to acquire the**
2 **area commonly known as Central Park on Manhattan in New York City on behalf of the**
3 **federal government; urging the United States Congress to declare Central Park to be a**
4 **wilderness area and to prohibit any further improvement or development of Central**
5 **Park unless authorized by an Act of Congress.**

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

7 **WHEREAS**, before Henry Hudson's landing on September 12, 1609, Manhattan was
8 a remarkably diverse and natural landscape of hills, valleys, forests, fields, freshwater
9 wetlands, salt marshes, beaches, springs, ponds, and streams and supported a rich and
10 abundant community of wildlife, and sustained people for thousands of years; and

11 **WHEREAS**, since the arrival of Henry Hudson, the unrestrained development of
12 buildings, highways, and urban sprawl on Manhattan has destroyed habitat, displaced
13 indigenous peoples, and disrupted what had been the delicate Muir Web; and

14 **WHEREAS** at least 1,000 species of plants and vertebrates, including 24 species of
15 mammals, 233 species of birds, 32 species of reptiles and amphibians, 85 species of fish, and

1 627 species of plants, and an unknown number of species of fungi, lichens, mosses, insects,
2 shellfish, and other invertebrates previously inhabited Manhattan; and

3 **WHEREAS** resident mammals previously included the gray wolf, gray fox, beaver,
4 white-tailed deer, elk, short-beaked common dolphin, long-finned pilot whale, bobcat,
5 mountain lion, cottontail rabbit, white-footed mouse, river otter, black bear, and red bat; and

6 **WHEREAS** resident bird species previously included the bald eagle, belted
7 kingfisher, wood duck, green heron, cedar waxwing, passenger pigeon, American goldfinch,
8 Baltimore oriole, peregrine falcon, wild turkey, and red-bellied woodpecker; and

9 **WHEREAS** resident plants previously included the sugar maple, mountain holly, wild
10 sarsaparilla, American ginseng, purple milkweed, yellow birch, wild cucumber, white oak, red
11 hickory, white ash, red pine, black spruce, mountain ash, and eastern cottonwood; and

12 **WHEREAS** resident reptiles previously included the loggerhead sea turtle, brown
13 snake, timber rattlesnake, eastern mud turtle, diamondback terrapin, and redbelly snake; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 1609, Manhattan's biodiversity density for each acre rivaled that of
15 national parks such as Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Great Smoky Mountains; and

16 **WHEREAS** Manhattan once had more than 570 hills, 60 miles of streams, 20 ponds,
17 and 300 springs; and

18 **WHEREAS** sandy beaches once reached from the tip of Manhattan to a point past
19 42nd Street on the Hudson River shore; beyond the shore was the vibrant, dynamic tidal
20 estuary with complex currents, sedimentary patterns, and the influence of the Hudson River;
21 and

22 **WHEREAS** Manhattan's Upper West Side and Tribeca were once a coastal oak-pine
23 forest with red maple swamps; and

24 **WHEREAS** Manhattan once had 55 different ecological communities, including
25 terrestrial communities, wetlands, pond and stream communities, and estuarine communities;
26 and

27 **WHEREAS** the Lenape and their ancestors lived in this area for thousands of years
28 before European contact, obtaining all the food, water, and materials they needed from the
29 local forests, wetlands, and waters; and

30 **WHEREAS**, in Northeastern Algonquin culture, the Lenape were considered the
31 "Ancient Ones," and their folklore suggests a close connection to the land and appreciation of

1 their role as a member of the ecosystem that was shared with the plentiful other species; and

2 **WHEREAS** Manhattan has an area of approximately 22.7 square miles, and Central
3 Park has an area of approximately 1.3 square miles; and

4 **WHEREAS** the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge has an area of approximately 29,687
5 square miles and Area 1002, the area for development in the refuge, has an area of
6 approximately 2,344 square miles; and

7 **WHEREAS** Central Park makes up approximately six percent of Manhattan; and

8 **WHEREAS** Area 1002 makes up approximately eight percent of the Arctic National
9 Wildlife Refuge; and

10 **WHEREAS** 16 U.S.C. 3143 requires an authorization by an Act of Congress before
11 leasing or other development leading to the production of oil and gas in the Arctic National
12 Wildlife Refuge may proceed;

13 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the President of the
14 United States and the United States Congress to acquire the area commonly known as Central
15 Park on behalf of the federal government; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
17 Congress to declare Central Park to be a wilderness area; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
19 Congress to enact a provision similar to 16 U.S.C. 3143 to prohibit any further improvement
20 or development of Central Park unless authorized by an Act of Congress.

21 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
22 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
23 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the
24 Interior; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
25 Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
26 Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell,
27 Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair of the Energy and
28 Natural Resources Committee of the U.S. Senate; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
29 Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
30 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version HJR 31
Fiscal Note Number _____
() Publish Date _____

Identifier (file name) HJR31-LEG-COU-1-26-12 Dept. Affected Legislature
Title "Urging the President of the United States and the United States Congress to acquire the area..." Appropriation Legislative Council
Allocation Council and Subcommittees
Sponsor Reps Johansen, Fairclough, Olson, Millett, Feige & Chenault
Requester House Resources OMB Component Number 783

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY13	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF						
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
1178	temp code (UGF)						
TOTAL		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES

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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs _____ (separate supplemental appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs _____ (separate capital appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Initial Version

Prepared by Jessica Geary, Finance Manager
Division Legislative Affairs Agency
Approved by Pamela Varni, Executive Director
Legislative Affairs Agency

Phone 465-6626
Date/Time 1/26/12 1:11 PM
Date 1/26/2012

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HJR 31

Analysis

This Legislation has zero fiscal impact on the Legislative Affairs Agency.

The New York Times

City Room

Blogging From the Five Boroughs

JANUARY 26, 2012, 6:58 AM

From Alaska, Great Concern for Central Park

By ANDY NEWMAN

Alaska: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, via Reuters; Central Park: Chang W. Lee/The New York Times
Know your native species: the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska (left) and Central Park in New York City (right).

Updated, 6:09 p.m. | In the interest of preserving an already-compromised sliver of urban wilderness, state legislators are asking the federal government to take over Central Park.

State legislators in Alaska, that is.

Annoyed with outsiders' meddling with the right to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, Representative Kyle Johansen, Republican of Ketchikan, introduced a resolution in Juneau on Monday that gives the states-rights-depriving Eastern elites a taste of their own medicine.

It urges the feds to "declare Central Park to be a wilderness area and to prohibit any further improvement or development of Central Park unless authorized by an act of Congress."

Many of Mr. Johansen's colleagues immediately signed on as co-sponsors, including the speaker of the house.

The resolution, first noted on this coast by West Side Rag, is primarily a piece of political satire, Mr. Johansen said Wednesday, but one with a solid basis in history.

"What I'm trying to accomplish," he said, "is to basically make a point of the hypocrisy of — and don't take offense — those East Coast folks who write a lot of checks to shut down Alaska, while in their own backyard, Manhattan has been turned from a pristine wild island supporting an amazing Muir web of life to having only Central Park left as a green belt. And even Central Park has been radically changed."

The resolution notes that before Henry Hudson arrived in 1609, Manhattan was "a remarkably diverse and natural landscape of hills, valleys, forests, fields," marshes, beaches, ponds and streams that supported populations of gray wolf, elk, black bear and mountain lion.

Since then, the measure says, “the unrestrained development of buildings, highways and urban sprawl on Manhattan has destroyed habitat, displaced indigenous peoples and disrupted” ecosystems.

Central Park makes up 6 percent of Manhattan; the area that pro-drilling lawmakers seek to open to oil exploration makes up 8 percent of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Ergo, if one landscape is worthy of federal protection, why not the other?

Though extractive industries are not allowed to operate in Central Park (unless you count the overpriced organic hot-dog vendor near the skating rink), the landscape has indeed been repeatedly disfigured over the years by zoos and faux Gothic castles and whatnot.

But Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe said that “the premise that Central Park is not as protected as a federal property in Alaska is not true.” Among other things, the park falls under the Public Trust Doctrine, which bars use of parks for any non-recreation purpose without approval from the state legislature.

In New York, not Alaska.

As stranger-than-satire history would have it, though, the federal takeover of Central Park was actually proposed during the city’s 1970s fiscal crisis.

A 1978 study rejected the idea. While it would bring in needed money and personnel, the study’s authors wrote, federalization would put the park in the hands of federal civil servants “who would not feel compelled to be responsive to local wishes concerning usage.”