

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1990

Source

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Legislative
Resolve No.

82



Relating to spruce bark beetle infestation.

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

WHEREAS the spruce bark beetle currently infests at least 177,000 acres of spruce forests throughout Southcentral and Interior Alaska; and

WHEREAS in 1989 the infestation covered 83,345 acres of state land and private land, 10,694 acres of national forest land, and 83,210 acres of other Federal land in the state; and

WHEREAS since approximately 1974, spruce bark beetles have seriously infested an estimated 3,000,000,000 board feet of timber on 500,000 acres of land on the Kenai Peninsula and created an extremely hazardous risk of forest fire and threat to life and property; and

WHEREAS an interagency task force of federal, state, and Kenai Peninsula Borough natural resource officials has proposed opening five 500-foot fuel breaks in the Kenai River Canyon; and

WHEREAS major recreation sites on the Kenai Peninsula, including the Russian River campground and the Resurrection Trail, may be closed for the summer due to extremely hazardous fire conditions; and

WHEREAS most of the trees in the Cooper Landing and the Russian River area have suffered more than a 90 percent mortality; and

WHEREAS an estimated 10,000,000,000 board feet of valuable timber is now dead or dying as a result of the spruce bark beetle infestation; and

WHEREAS proper forest management, including the harvest of diseased, dying, damaged, and windblown trees, and the prescribed burning of infested areas would significantly reduce the risk of forest fires, the spread of the infestation, and would generate jobs for many residents of the state;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports the actions of the Spruce Bark Beetle Interagency Task Force to ensure the safety of life and property on the Kenai Peninsula by developing an emergency response to combat the spruce bark beetle infestation; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges that the efforts of the Interagency Task Force be broadened to include other cities and boroughs that may be affected by the infestation and that alternatives for the reduction of the fire danger and the prevention of epidemic outbreaks of spruce bark beetle infestation in susceptible stands in other areas of the state be undertaken.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Lennie Gorsuch, Commissioner of Natural Resources; the Honorable Don W. Collinsworth, Commissioner of Fish and Game; to M.R. "Bob" Dick, State Forester; to Michael Barton, Regional Forester, United States Forest Service; to Peggy Fox, Supervisor of the Chugach National Forest; to Don Gilman, Mayor of the Kenai Peninsula Borough; and to Dorothy Jones, Mayor of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.