

STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE

1997

Source  
CSHJR 24(RES)

Legislative  
Resolve No.  
12



Relating to challenging the environmental and economic integrity of Alaska timber as Christmas decor for the United States Capitol.

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

**WHEREAS** the Tongass National Forest has been chosen by the Clinton Administration to provide Christmas trees to decorate the nation's Capitol and congressional offices; and

**WHEREAS** the grace and beauty of Alaska's native tree species are well suited for such a distinct purpose; and

**WHEREAS** Alaskans are a generous people, and their State's resources a tremendous asset that if carefully managed by the people most closely affected can be the backbone of a strong economy; and

**WHEREAS** trees harvested for the economic benefit of the people of the Tongass are subject to full public comment and environmental review; and

**WHEREAS**, under normal conditions, the Alaska Legislature would regard the opportunity to provide federal offices with Christmas trees from our national forest as the highest compliment and honor; and

**WHEREAS** conditions are not normal, as one of Alaska's two pulp mills and the

state's largest sawmill have shut down while Alaska's remaining pulp mill has announced it will close in March at a cost of thousands of jobs; and

**WHEREAS**, even with the recent signing of a three-year contract to supply wood to Southeast Alaska's two largest sawmills, consistent supply remains a concern for their continued existence; and

**WHEREAS** over 60 percent of Southeast Alaska's timber-related jobs have been eliminated since 1990; and

**WHEREAS** the Clinton Administration has ignored the efforts of the Alaska congressional delegation and the Alaska State Legislature to secure the livelihoods of the workers, their families, and the timber dependent communities of Southeast Alaska; and

**WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature deems it inappropriate to harvest trees for decorative purposes, and ask Southeast Alaskans to incur the cost, while Southeast Alaska timber jobs are being extinguished, depressing the area's economy; and

**WHEREAS** what should be an honor is instead an affront as it carries the message that careful harvesting of our trees is acceptable to decorate the nation's Capitol and the halls of Congress, yet not acceptable to provide jobs for the people of Southeast Alaska;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes harvesting of Alaska's trees to provide pleasure for those far removed is symbolic of a failed national policy which has cost Southeast Alaska communities thousands of year-round, family supporting jobs and caused untold personal suffering; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Legislature opposes the harvesting of Christmas trees for the nation's Capitol and other federal and congressional offices from the Tongass National Forest and urges that it not be done without full public comment and a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests the Clinton Administration to find another source for the 1998 White House Christmas tree festivities in light of the social and economic hardship forced upon the unemployed timber workers, their families, and the timber dependent communities of the Tongass.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Strom Thurmond, President Pro Tempore of the U.S.

Senate; the Honorable Trent Lott, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Thomas Daschle, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Dick Armey, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Richard A. Gephardt, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; Secretary Dan Glickman, Department of Agriculture; Michael Dombeck, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service; Philip Janik, Regional Forester, Region X, U.S. Forest Service; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.