

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8(RES)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/15/13

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATORS MCGUIRE, Gardner, Ellis

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting the continued and increased exploration, extraction, processing, and**
2 **production of rare earth elements in the state; and urging the United States Congress to**
3 **support efforts of the state to develop rare earth elements in the state for the benefit of**
4 **the economic and national security of the United States.**

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

6 **WHEREAS** rare earth elements, those elements consisting of lanthanum through
7 lutetium on the periodic table, plus scandium and yttrium, possess unique chemical, electrical,
8 and physical properties that make them indispensable for a wide variety of emerging critical
9 technologies needed for defense, clean energy, and other consumer and industrial uses; and

10 **WHEREAS** dysprosium and terbium are among the scarcest, most valuable, and most
11 sought-after rare earth metals needed for green technology and military applications; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in the past, the United States was largely self-sufficient in rare earth
13 elements but today has become almost entirely dependent on foreign sources of yttrium,
14 niobium, tantalum, zirconium, and other rare earth elements; and

15 **WHEREAS** the value-added technology and skill to allow both the recovery of rare

1 earth elements from mineral forms in ore and the manufacture of finished products, including
2 powerful magnets, from rare earth elements has almost entirely migrated to China along with
3 the actual mining of rare earth element ores; and

4 **WHEREAS** China currently produces 95 percent of the world's rare earth elements
5 but reduced the export of rare earth elements by 54 percent from 2005 to 2010 and by nearly
6 50 percent from 2010 to 2011; and

7 **WHEREAS** a future in which manufacturing of high-tech military equipment takes
8 place only outside of the United States poses a risk to national security, and the manufacturing
9 of wind turbines, solar panels, advanced batteries, and geothermal steam turbines produced
10 only outside of the United States poses a risk to energy security; and

11 **WHEREAS** the development and expansion of extraction, processing, refining, and
12 production are needed to provide the United States with self-reliance in technologies that
13 depend on rare earth elements; and

14 **WHEREAS** mineral resources make up a major portion of the state's economic assets,
15 and the deposits discovered at Bokan Mountain on the southern end of Prince of Wales Island
16 are rich in the heavy rare earth elements of europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium,
17 thulium, holmium, erbium, ytterbium, lutetium, and yttrium; and

18 **WHEREAS** the Bokan Mountain deposits are the only known deposits in the world
19 that have deep water access, accessible labor, and prospective power sources; and

20 **WHEREAS** the Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan
21 designates the Bokan Mountain area for mineral development, and the state's Prince of Wales
22 Island Area Plan classifies the Kendrick Bay area for mineral and forestry access and
23 development; and

24 **WHEREAS** economic opportunities on Prince of Wales Island and throughout the
25 state have significantly decreased; and

26 **WHEREAS** increased exploration for rare earth elements along with the
27 establishment of secondary processing and research facilities related to rare earth elements in
28 the state will create new career opportunities for Alaskans; and

29 **WHEREAS** development of rare earth element deposits in the state is critical to the
30 economic and military security of the state and the nation;

31 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the continued and

1 increased exploration, extraction, processing, and production of rare earth elements in the
2 state; and be it

3 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges state agencies that
4 administer permits required for the development of the rare earth elements in the state to
5 expedite consideration and issuance of permits required for the development of rare earth
6 element deposits in the state; and be it

7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the governor and the
8 director of the division of geological and geophysical surveys in the Department of Natural
9 Resources to work closely with the United States Geological Survey, the United States
10 Department of Commerce, and the United States Department of Defense to explore for and
11 identify deposits of rare earth elements in the state, develop an information database on rare
12 earth elements in the state, and promote the development of the rare earth elements extraction,
13 processing, and production industry in the state; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
15 Congress to support the efforts of the state to develop rare earth elements in the state for the
16 benefit of the economic and national security of the United States.

17 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
18 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
19 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the
20 Interior; the Honorable Leon E. Panetta, United States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable
21 John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi,
22 Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Harry Reid, Majority
23 Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S.
24 Senate; the Honorable Ron Wyden, Chair of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee of
25 the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S.
26 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
27 delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 113th United States Congress.