

**STATE OF ALASKA
SENATE**

2010

Source
SR 11

**Senate
Resolve No.**
8



Relating to the mining and processing of rare earth elements in Alaska and to the stockpiling of rare earth elements; and urging the United States Congress to pass H.R. 4866.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE:

WHEREAS the United States once was largely self-sufficient in rare earth elements;
and

WHEREAS mineable concentrations of rare earth elements are not commonly found;
and

WHEREAS rare earth elements are exceptionally valuable because of their unique chemical, electrical, and physical properties; and

WHEREAS the unique chemical, electrical, and physical properties of rare earth elements make them indispensable for a wide variety of emerging critical technologies, and, in particular, technologies needed for defense and clean energy applications; and

WHEREAS the United States has become almost entirely dependent on foreign sources of yttrium, niobium, and rare earth elements, as well as associated elements of

tantalum and zirconium; and

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

WHEREAS the value-added technology and skill to allow both the recovery of rare earth elements from mineral forms in ore and the manufacture of finished products, such as magnets, from rare earth elements has almost entirely migrated to China, as has the actual mining of rare earth ores; and

WHEREAS China currently accounts for 97 percent of the world's production of rare earth elements; and

WHEREAS China has reduced its exports of rare earth elements; and

WHEREAS a future in which manufacturing of wind turbines, solar panels, advanced batteries, and geothermal steam turbines are produced only outside of the United States poses a risk to the country; and

WHEREAS, after extraction of rare earth ores, processing, refining, and production are needed to provide the United States with self-reliance in these technologies; and

WHEREAS, in contrast to rare earth element deposits found elsewhere in the United States, Bokan Mountain discoveries on the southern end of Prince of Wales Island are rich in the heavy rare earth elements of europium, gadolinium, terbium, dysprosium, thulium, holmium, erbium, ytterbium, lutetium, and yttrium; and

WHEREAS continued exploration, together with the establishment of secondary processing and research facilities in Alaska, would result in new career opportunities for Alaskans; and

WHEREAS current economic opportunities on Prince of Wales Island and throughout Alaska have significantly decreased; and

WHEREAS the federal Tongass National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan has been completed and the Bokan Mountain area zoned for mineral development; and

WHEREAS the state's Prince of Wales Island Area Plan has been completed and the Kendrick Bay area classified for mineral and forestry access and development; and

WHEREAS overland access and transport requirements in the Tongass National Forest are mitigated by immediate access to the mining property by ocean transport; and

WHEREAS H.R. 4866 has been introduced in the United States Congress to

reestablish a competitive domestic rare earth elements production industry, a domestic rare earth processing, refining, purification, and metals production industry, a domestic rare earth metals alloying industry, and a domestic rare earth-based magnet production industry and supply chain in the United States;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate urges the United States Congress expeditiously to pass H.R. 4866; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate recommends continued exploration of rare earth deposits in Alaska, the issuance of permits, as promptly as allowed by law, for extraction, processing, and production of rare earth materials on the Bokan Mountain properties, and commencement of planning for extraction, processing, and production of rare earth materials by industry.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ike Skelton, Chair of the Armed Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Sander M. Levin, Acting Chair of the Ways and Means Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Barney Frank, Chair of the Financial Services Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 111th United States Congress.