

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## REPRESENTATIVE JIM ELKINS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 1, 2005

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### **Elkins Wants More Federal Lands in Alaskan Hands**

(JUNEAU) – Today, Representative Jim Elkins (R-Ketchikan) introduced House Joint Resolution 14 urging the United States Congress to pass legislation to convey land to the University of Alaska.

U.S. Senate Bill 293, sponsored by U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), grants the university 250,000 acres of federal lands and up to 250,000 additional acres of federal lands following a land grant match from the State of Alaska. This bill will help address a discrepancy between the land the University has previously received from the federal government and that of other land grant universities across the country. Under the Federal School Lands Act of 1915, the University of Alaska received 111,211 federal acres, that's only a third of what it was supposed to receive and far less than any other western state university.

“Lisa introduced S.293 in the U.S. Senate last month and passage of that bill will improve the University system in Alaska and will give them ‘a shot to the arm.’ That is something all Alaskans, from Ketchikan to Barrow, should support,” Representative Elkins said. “A flourishing University is one of the keys to a strong, stable economy.”

Under S.293, the University would receive the right to select an initial 250,000 acres from the federal government, provided it gives back its current in-holdings in some national parks and refuges.

Further restrictions in the bill limit the lands the University may select. For example, the University cannot select any lands within conservation system units, from federal lands used by federal or military institutions or lands currently classified as roadless (LUD II) in the Tongass National Forest in Southeast. The bill limits selections in the National Petroleum Reserve Alaska (NPR) to guarantee that both the state and federal governments benefit from future oil leasing in the petroleum reserve.

“This resolution will let members of Congress understand how important the passage of S. 293 is to our state and will relay the sense of urgency we feel about this issue. We need to let them know that Alaska is paying attention,” said Representative Elkins.

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