

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE JIM ELKINS

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Sponsor Statement for HJR 17, "Opposing the 'Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act'"

House Joint Resolution 17, "Opposing the 'Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act'," expresses the desire of the Alaska State Legislature.

Also known as the Recreational Access Tax, this act allows the Forest Service, Bureau Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation to charge fees for recreational use of federally managed land by the general public. Once enacted, access fees will be required in order to enter onto certain lands. Failure to comply with these "access fees" can result in substantial fines and criminal penalties.

The federal government is the largest landowner in Alaska, managing over 2/3's of our total acreage. Approximately 80 million acres have been set aside for public use; and include national parks, wildlife refuges, and national forests.

Fees imposed by this act are regressive and place an undue burden on the people living in rural areas and surrounded by these federal lands.

The Montana, Oregon, and Colorado State Legislatures have already passed resolutions demanding the U.S. Congress to repeal the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act. Today, we ask you to support HJR 17, and express our opposition toward the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.