

House Condemns Clinton Roadless Policy

Unanimous Vote in House Moves Rep. Wilson's HJR 6 to Senate

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(JUNEAU) -- The Alaska House of Representatives spoke with one voice today in passing a resolution condemning former President Bill Clinton's surprise extension of a controversial roadless policy to the Tongass and Chugach National Forests.

Rep. Peggy Wilson (R-Wrangell) sponsored House Joint Resolution 6 to draw attention to Alaskans' near-universal opposition to what many see as a double-cross by the Clinton Administration on a critical forest management issue. The House passed HJR 6 with no dissent.

"This roadless policy was imposed on Alaska in blatant disregard of the public process that resulted in the Tongass Land Management Plan," said Wilson. "We followed this process in good faith and at the cost of \$13 million and 11 years, and it's outrageous that Clinton would reverse it in the last days of his administration."

Wilson also pointed out that the roadless policy violates the "no-more" clause in the Alaska National Interests Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), which reserved to Congress the authority to create new wilderness in Alaska. She said that barring road-building in national forests in Alaska would harm Alaska's tourism and natural resources industries, limit residents' access to important recreational areas, and lock up vast new areas as de facto wilderness without due process.

"Like many Alaskans, I am vehemently opposed to including the Tongass and Chugach national forests in this policy, and ask that we work together to support overturning it, whether by litigation, by congressional action, or by action of President George W. Bush," Wilson said. HJR 6 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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