

OUR LAST CHANCE — DON'T LET IT DIE.

WILSON

ACTION



James C. Bartonek

WHAT THE ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS ISSUE IS ALL ABOUT

WHAT H.R. 39 DOES

H.R. 39 as approved by the House Interior Committee would:

- add 42,650,000 acres to our National Park System: Gates of the Arctic, Wrangells-St. Elias, Lake Clark, and more. Mt. McKinley, Katmai, and Glacier Bay would have additions to protect complete ecosystems.
- add 50,710,000 acres to our National Wildlife Refuge System: Yukon Delta, Yukon Flats, Alaska Peninsula, additions to the Arctic National Wildlife Range, and more.
- designate new wild rivers: the Killik, the Copper, the Noatak, and more.
- Designate portions *within* the parklands and wildlife refuges as wilderness for full protection under the 1964 Wilderness Act. Wilderness areas would be designated on the existing national forest in Southeast Alaska, too.

The scale of these proposals exceeds that of any previous conservation legislation. On federal lands in Alaska we can set apart a 100 million acre "conservation trust" to balance the land use pattern so dominated by development. **As never before—as never again—we have the opportunity to protect whole ecosystems before development has scarred them, and at no cost for acquisition, since these are federal lands already.**

THE QUESTION OF BALANCE

Our opponents argue H.R. 39 would "lock up" too much land, too many resources. They argue it would strangle their development.

In the largest statehood land grant by far (bigger than all California), and in the land grant for justice to the Natives, Congress has been generous indeed. Another 81 million acres of residual federal land will be available for multiple uses.

H.R. 39 is the means for Congress to now be generous to the rest of us—and to the future. *The national interest warrants a "land grant" too: this priceless heritage of wildness of global significance in Alaska.*

WHAT THREATENS H.R. 39?

Because of its scale, H.R. 39 has attracted great opposition. With seemingly unlimited money, our opponents are waging all-out war against the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act. Aiding them are the governor and the state legislature, the Alaska congressional delegation, and others.

They claim this is an "extreme" bill that would "lock up" the resources of Alaska—though two-thirds of the state will remain available for development (and that is the most resource-rich land). Their objective is fewer conservation units, smaller in size, with a minimum of protected wilderness. If they cannot reduce the acreage in

the bill, they will try to weaken protection by extending incompatible uses to a greater portion, with weaker controls.

THE POLITICS OF ALASKA LANDS

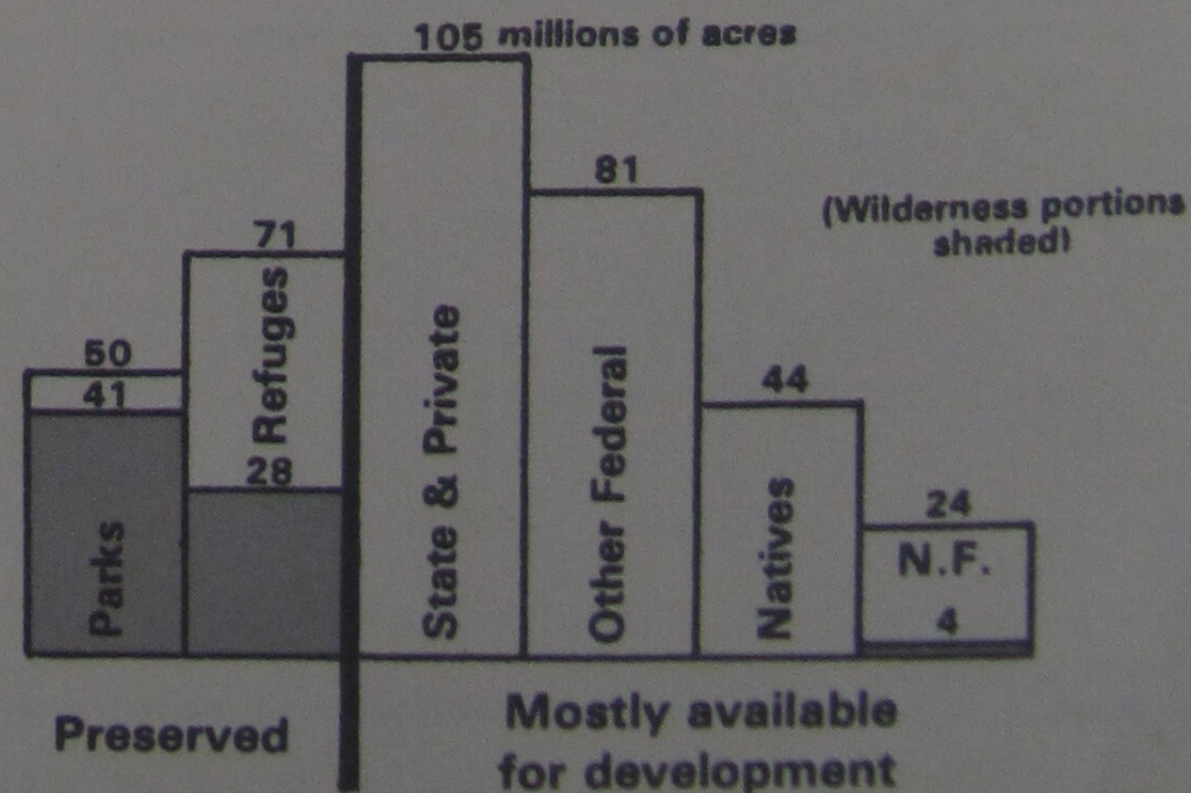
H.R. 39, as it reaches the floor of the House of Representatives, is already very much a *compromise bill*. Throughout the bill's year-and-a-half long consideration by the House Interior Committee the opponents have offered amendment after amendment. Rep. Don Young (R., AK) and Rep. Lloyd Meeds (D., WA) are leading the forces who seek weakening amendments on the House floor. In addition, they may offer an overall substitute motion, to replace the text of H.R. 39 with a radically scaled down bill (as they tried but failed to do during Committee consideration).

By contrast, many Committee members feel that *strengthening amendments* are required—and the Alaska Coalition strongly agrees. Although H.R. 39 is a basically good bill, and a great credit to its primary architects, Reps. Morris K. Udall (D., AZ) and John Seiberling (D., OH), it has been compromised—it can and must be strengthened!

PRESENT STATUS: Having been approved by the House Interior Committee, the bill now has been sequentially referred to the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries. That Committee will report the bill back to the full House by May 1st, and will recommend its own amendments. Some of these may be improvements on the Interior Committee's version of the bill; others may be serious weakenings (especially an expected amendment to knock out most of the wilderness from the National Wildlife Ranges). **The Alaska Coalition supports the Udall-Seiberling Interior Committee version of H.R. 39, with important strengthening amendments as outlined here.**

DIVIDING UP ALASKA (IT ONCE BELONGED TO ALL OF US)

- 1867: 375,000,000 acres purchased from Russia—all federal.
- 1959: 104,000,000 acres given to new State of Alaska (they could choose any, chose the best)
- 1971: 44,000,000 acres granted to settle Alaska Natives claims (they choose the best from a pool of 100 million)
- 1978: ? *FOR THE NATIONAL INTEREST*



THE ISSUES:

HOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE CAN HELP

• **SUBSTITUTES OR WEAKENING AMENDMENTS.** Urge your Representative to oppose any Meeds/Young substitute or weakening amendments, or those of others working with them.

• **CUTTING MORE ACREAGE FROM THE NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS.** Urge your Representative to oppose any further reductions in the extent of the proposed national parks, wildlife refuges, and wild rivers—and to support additions.

• **WILDERNESS.** Alaska's wilderness is great wilderness: remote, on a grand scale, with ecosystems whole and wildlife populations intact. The wilderness acreage in H.R. 39 has already been reduced by half (with the balance of the conservation units to receive wilderness study). The portions of parklands, refuges, and national forests proposed for immediate wilderness designation in H.R. 39 have already been thoroughly studied, yet it is being argued that they still need more study. Urge your Representative to vote against any further erosion in the wilderness acreage in H.R. 39, and to help restore key wilderness lands deleted earlier (especially in Southeast Alaska's national forests and in the Arctic National Wildlife Range).

• **MINERALS ACCESS PROCESS.** H.R. 39 includes a process which would allow mineral exploration and development in some of these conservation units (but not in national parks nor the wilderness portions of other units) if it were in the national interest and approved by both the House and Senate. This is a controversial and untested process. The Carter Administration wants these lands closed to hard rock mineral access. *If there is to be any such "minerals access process", it is essential that each such activity be approved case-by-case by a two-house joint resolution of Congress, as the Interior Committee bill requires—but it should be limited to oil and gas.*

• **ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE RANGE.** At 17 million acres (plus 10 million more in Canada) this enlarged area would be the Earth's largest wilderness preserve, home of the internationally significant Porcupine caribou herd—Alaska's largest. Because of its wild values, President Carter has urged that this be the last place we ever exploit for oil and gas. However, the Interior Committee approved an amendment mandating federal oil and gas exploration within portions of the wilderness designated in the Range, including critical caribou calving areas. Urge your Representative to support

amendments which will be offered to provide complete wilderness protection for all of the Arctic National Wildlife Range, deleting the oil and gas loophole.

• **MISTY FJORDS WILDERNESS.** This spectacular de facto wilderness of deep fjords, shoreline, cliffs and muskegs in Southeast Alaska was dropped under pressure from timber and mining corporations. Urge your Representative to support amendments to designate the entire 2.3 million acre Misty Fjords Wilderness and other prime areas within the Tongass National Forest.

• **HUNTING IN ALASKA.** Even with the new national parks set aside, sport hunting would continue on over 90% of the land in Alaska. The bill also provides for the continuation of subsistence use of fish and wildlife by Native and rural Alaskans who may choose to maintain a subsistence lifestyle.

The Interior Committee adopted an amendment allowing commercial trappers and hunting guides to continue their enterprises within the new national parks for another 20 years. This unprecedented loophole would give these hunting guides a private monopoly on federal parklands. Urge your Representative to support amendments which would protect the integrity of our National Park System by deleting this provision to "grandfather" commercial trapping and hunting guides in the Alaskan national parks.

DO YOU NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Because the strategy of both opponents and supporters is still being shaped, we cannot predict every amendment or substitute motion at the time this bulletin is being printed. To learn the latest status of the bill (including the specific amendments and the time-table for the floor votes) you may call our **Alaska Coalition HOT-LINE** 24 hours a day for a recorded up-to-the-moment message. The number is 202/547-5550. Between 11 p.m. and 8 a.m. your time, you can call this number for a maximum charge of 39¢.

If you need further information or other help—or if you can offer useful "intelligence" about your Representative's position—call us at 202/543-3663.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Let your Representative know that voting for final passage of H.R. 39 is not enough; this would be an empty gesture if weakening amendments or an overall substitute were adopted first. *These are the land and wildlife conservation votes of the century—and your Representative must understand that you and many others take this issue just that seriously!*

Time is short. These votes will likely occur during the week of May 8th. Act now. Because the votes could slip until later in the month, please keep up your efforts until you learn that the votes have actually occurred.

THE PRIORITY TASKS

1. WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY. *Nothing has the impact of a concise, well-written letter which expresses your views and conveys the importance you attach to the issue.* Stress your key points in your own words. It does not help to mention your membership in conservation groups, so simply write as an individual active citizen. Tell your Representative why far-off Alaska is personally important to you. (ADDRESS: Hon. _____, House of Representatives, Washington, D.C. 20515).

After May 3rd (or later if you learn that the timing for the vote is set back) letters may not reach your Representative in time. Mailgrams are delivered overnight and it is not expensive to send a lengthy mailgram that goes into some detail on your views (rather than a less effective terse telegram). For the toll-free Western Union mailgram number in your area check your directory or call 800-555-1212. A 100 word mailgram costs \$2.95 from anywhere in the U.S., a 300 word mailgram \$5.95—well worth it in this fight for Alaska.

2. TELEPHONE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE OR HIS STAFF. (The U.S. Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121). Ask to speak with the Representative personally or with the staff member handling the Alaska issue. Ask how your Representative is "leaning" on these votes, or what issues particularly interest or bother him.

If you receive more than one of these alerts, pass the extra on. The volume of this joint mailing, under difficult time schedules, made cross-checking mailing lists prohibitive.

If questions come up which you can't answer, promise to get him the information. We can provide details or arrange for a follow-up visit to your Representative by a knowledgeable Alaska Coalition spokesman. Call us for the follow-up.

3. MEET WITH YOUR REPRESENTATIVE AT HOME. Many Representatives will be home in their districts prior to these votes. Ask the staff (in the Washington office or in the local district office) to schedule a meeting with you and members of your group. If you need help or information call us.

4. WHEN YOU WRITE, MAILGRAM, OR PHONE. Emphasize your continuing concern. Ask your Representative to tell you how he feels about the bill. Ask him to let you know how the votes turn out and request that he send you the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD for the days of the House debate and votes on H.R. 39.

IF YOU CAN DO MORE

What you do right at home will have far greater impact than what we can do here in Washington, D.C.

1. SPREAD THE WORD.
2. ACTIVATE YOUR LOCAL GROUP.
3. KEEP IT UP—AND USE YOUR IMAGINATION!

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**ALASKA
ACTION ALERT:
100 million acres of wildness
hangs in the balance.
CONGRESS WILL VOTE
IN JUST DAYS.**

FIRST CLASS MAIL