

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

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7
8 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
9 MONTANA URGING THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO WITHDRAW ITS DECISION TO IMPLEMENT A
10 WINTER USE PLAN THAT WOULD ELIMINATE SNOWMOBILE USE IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK
11 AND TO SUBSTITUTE A PLAN THAT ENSURES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FUTURE SELF-DIRECTED
12 SNOWMOBILE ACCESS TO YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK; AND URGING CONGRESS TO PROVIDE
13 ADEQUATE FUNDING TO THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE PERSONNEL TO
14 ENSURE HEALTH AND SAFETY.

15
16 WHEREAS, the National Park Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior have announced a
17 new winter use plan to implement severe restrictions on snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park,
18 culminating in a ban on snowmobiles in the park for other than administrative purposes beginning with the
19 2003-2004 winter season, citing negative impacts on the park environment as a result of emissions and
20 noise, despite recent scientific studies showing that the data used in making the decision was antiquated
21 and in some cases flawed; and

22 WHEREAS, the Montana Legislature is concerned about the management of internationally known
23 resource values found in Montana while maintaining the economic well-being of communities surrounding
24 Yellowstone National Park that are heavily dependent on recreation to provide revenue for both public and
25 private economic activity; and

26 WHEREAS, over 75,000 people annually visit Yellowstone National Park on snowmobiles to see
27 and enjoy the scenery, wildlife, and spectacles of nature in a winter setting, including many people who
28 consider the snowmobile to be not only a form of transportation, but also a desirable part of the winter
29 experience; and

30 WHEREAS, a large percentage of more than \$44 million in annual expenditures by nonresident

1 snowmobile users in Montana is related to the West Yellowstone, Montana, area, providing approximately
2 600 jobs while allowing sustainable use and enjoyment of the Park's resources; and

3 WHEREAS, West Yellowstone, Montana, and other gateway communities may experience ~~as much~~
4 ~~as a 50%~~ A SIGNIFICANT decline in winter visitors, which could result in a ~~reduction of \$22 million or more~~
5 ~~in~~ SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE IMPACT ON the economy of the three counties of Montana surrounding Yellowstone
6 National Park; and

7 WHEREAS, the new winter use plan fails to adequately consider alternatives to snowmobile
8 regulation short of absolute prohibition, despite recent and ongoing advancements in snowmobile
9 technology, such as the four-stroke "Yellowstone Special" snowmobile now in use, that reduce noise and
10 emission levels; and

11 WHEREAS, the new winter use plan is contrary to the intent of the state of Montana and the
12 wishes of most of the snowmobiling public and many members of the general public, denying certain
13 members of the public their preferred access to publicly funded and managed lands for valid educational
14 and pleasuring purposes; and

15 WHEREAS, the overall economy of the state is of significant concern to the Montana Legislature;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the states of Montana, Idaho, and Wyoming and many affected counties were originally
18 considered cooperators in the process leading to adoption of the new winter use plan, but have been
19 unable to have their input as cooperators and participants in the decisionmaking process considered in a
20 meaningful manner by the National Park Service and other federal officials.

21

22 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
23 STATE OF MONTANA:

24 (1) That the National Park Service be urged to:

25 (A) withdraw its decision ultimately banning snowmobile use in Yellowstone National Park and
26 replace its new winter use plan with a plan that:

27 ~~(a)~~(i) maintains AND ENHANCES historic winter visitor use levels;

28 ~~(b)~~(ii) ensures the opportunity for future self-directed access to Yellowstone National Park by
29 snowmobile;

30 ~~(c)~~(iii) fully considers the economic impacts on surrounding communities; and

