

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 90

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 54

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 90—Relative to the Wilderness Act of 1964.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 10, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

ACR 90, Rendon. Wilderness Act of 1964.

This measure would commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and proclaim the significance of continuing to protect national wilderness areas.

WHEREAS, In 1964 the United States Congress passed the Wilderness Act of 1964 by an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote, and this farsighted legislation was signed by President Lyndon Johnson on September 3, 1964; and

WHEREAS, The Wilderness Act of 1964 brought into being America’s National Wilderness Preservation System, federal lands to be “administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave federal lands unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and will provide for the protection of these areas and the preservation of their wilderness character”; and

WHEREAS, The Wilderness Act of 1964 made it the “policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness ... in order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition”; and

WHEREAS, Wilderness, “in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape,” is recognized as “federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable, and has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation”; and

WHEREAS, President Barack Obama said, in proclaiming September 2011 as National Wilderness Month, “The mystery and wonder of the wilderness is deeply rooted in our national character. For many of the first Americans — American Indians and Alaska Natives — the wilderness provided a source of sustenance and a foundation for their ways of life. Later, as explorers and the pioneers of a young country moved west, they found adventure and new beginnings in the landscapes of our Nation. ...

From our earliest days, America's identity has been tied to the powerful waterfalls, soaring peaks, and vast plains of its land"; and

WHEREAS, President Obama also stated, "in the 21st century, the importance of maintaining our wilderness heritage has only grown. Protecting our wilderness areas and their riches — clean water, stretches of undisturbed land, thriving wildlife, and healthy ecosystems — is critical to the health of our environment and our communities. Today, wilderness areas serve as places for us to roam, hunt, fish, and find solitude. They are also strong engines of local economies, providing tourism and recreation revenue for communities"; and

WHEREAS, The Wilderness Act of 1964 marked a fundamental cultural shift from a need to conquer nature to the need to preserve it and is a modern philosophical expression of the human need to find spiritual solace in nature; and

WHEREAS, California, inspired by the Wilderness Act of 1964, has established its own exemplary state wilderness system, in which state lands in a natural condition are preserved by law similarly to our state's substantial federal wilderness, allowing Californians to take special pride and additional pleasure in enjoying the benefits of wilderness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature proclaims the significance of our National Wilderness Preservation System to our nation's cultural, scientific, historical, and spiritual heritage and, during the 50th anniversary year of the Wilderness Act of 1964, encourages each Californian to embrace our nation's legacy of protecting and preserving our vast wilderness as a bequest for generations to come and also for the benefit of our wildlife, from the largest to the smallest creatures; and be it further

Resolved, That all Californians are urged to value wilderness as a place where all can experience the spirit that shaped America, and to honor the uniquely American qualities of the Wilderness Act of 1964, a remarkable societal compact whereby the American people decided to forego, in certain special places, the prevailing trend toward development, thereby allowing nature, not human machinery and invention, to have the upper hand; and be it further

Resolved, That, in this golden anniversary year of the Wilderness Act of 1964, the Legislature invites all Californians to visit and enjoy our wilderness areas, to learn about their vast history, and to aid in the continued protection of our precious national treasures; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.