HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 02-1051

BY REPRESENTATIVES Alexander, Cadman, Decker, Larson, Spradley, and Weddig;
also SENATORS Isgar, Chlouber, Hillman, May, McElhany, Owen, Taylor, and Teck.

CONCERNING OPPOSITION TO THE FEDERAL RECREATIONAL FEE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM.

WHEREAS, In 1996 Congress authorized the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program, which allows the United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to charge visitors daily and yearly fees for recreation on publicly owned land under their management; and

WHEREAS, The Recreational Fee Demonstration Program has been implemented on selected public lands in Colorado and one might reasonably expect that the program will be extended to include many more public lands throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Recreational fees constitute double taxation and bear no relationship to the actual costs of recreation such as hiking, picnicking, observing wildlife, or scenic driving on state and county roads and public rights of way; and
WHEREAS, The concept of paying Recreational Fee Demonstration Program fees to use public lands is contrary to the idea that public lands belong to the American people and are places where everyone is granted access and is welcome, a concept that has been and should remain in place; and

WHEREAS, The original intent of the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program was to improve the public lands, public facilities, and visitor services, but instead the program has served only to limit access to public lands and has garnered strong and widespread public criticism; and

WHEREAS, Public land agencies have been underfunded and Congress should restore funding to these agencies; and

WHEREAS, While the controversy over the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program continues, the issues that the fees were meant to resolve, such as poorly signed trails, bridges in disrepair, and the scarcity of picnic areas and campsites, of which many are in disrepair or vandalized, remain inadequately addressed; and

WHEREAS, The purchase of a pass to enter public lands under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program demonstrates support to the program, but the limited means of expressing opposition to the program raises the concern that some citizens may be deterred from visiting and enjoying public lands in Colorado and throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, Tourism is an important industry to Colorado and recreational fees will have a negative impact on the state and local economies; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-third General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate concurring herein:
That the General Assembly recommends that the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program be abolished and Congress restore funding to the public land agencies within Colorado, and that no recreational fees be imposed on federal lands within the State of Colorado under the Recreational Fee Demonstration Program.

Be It FurtherResolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to the Governor of Colorado, to the Bureau of Land Management, the United States Forest Service, the President of the United States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, the majority and minority leadership of the United States Senate, and to each member of the Colorado Congressional Delegation.

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Doug Dean  Stan Matsunaka
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE  PRESIDENT OF
OF REPRESENTATIVES  THE SENATE

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Judith Rodrigue  Karen Goldman
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE  SECRETARY OF
OF REPRESENTATIVES  THE SENATE