SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 05-015


CONCERNING OPPOSITION TO THE "FEDERAL LANDS RECREATION ENHANCEMENT ACT".

WHEREAS, In 2004 Congress authorized H.R. 3283, the "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act", (Act) which allows the United States Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation to charge visitors fees for recreation on publicly owned land under their management; and

WHEREAS, H.R. 3283 was never approved by the U.S. House of Representatives and was never introduced, never had hearings, and was never approved by the U.S. Senate, but was instead attached to omnibus spending bill H.R. 4818 as an appropriations rider; and

WHEREAS, The "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act" is substantive legislation, including criminal penalties, that fundamentally changes the way America's public lands are funded and managed; 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 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 fees imposed by the Act are a regressive tax that places an undue burden on the people living in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by large areas of federal land, as well as discriminating against lower-income and working Americans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their enjoyment of publicly owned land; and

WHEREAS, The fees imposed by the Act are a regressive tax that places an undue burden on the people living in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by large areas of federal land, as well as discriminating against lower-income and working Americans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their enjoyment of publicly owned land; and

WHEREAS, The fees imposed by the Act are a regressive tax that places an undue burden on the people living in rural areas adjacent to or surrounded by large areas of federal land, as well as discriminating against lower-income and working Americans by placing financial obstacles in the way of their enjoyment of publicly owned land; and

WHEREAS, These public land access fees have been highly controversial and are opposed by hundreds of organizations and county governments, several state legislatures, and by millions of rural Americans; and

WHEREAS, The Act also establishes an interagency pass to be used to cover entrance fees and recreational amenity fees for federal lands and waters, disregarding the substantially different ways in which national parks and other federal public lands are managed and funded; and

WHEREAS, The Act also establishes an interagency pass to be used to cover entrance fees and recreational amenity fees for federal lands and waters, disregarding the substantially different ways in which national parks and other federal public lands are managed and funded; and

WHEREAS, The limited means of expressing opposition to, and the lack of public debate in the implementation of, the fee 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 Senate of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

That the General Assembly demands that the "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act", which was enacted on December 8, 2004, be abolished, and that no recreational fees be imposed on federal lands within the state of Colorado under the "Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act".

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to Colorado Governor Bill Owens; United States Senators Larry Craig, Pete Domenici, Conrad Burns, and Craig Thomas; United States Representatives Jerry Lewis, Richard Pombo, Greg Walden, Devin Nunes, and Ralph Regula; President George W. Bush; 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.

Joan Fitz-Gerald
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

Andrew Romanoff
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Karen Goldman
SECRETARY OF THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES