

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from Kansas.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session and then recess until 2:15 p.m. for the weekly conference meetings.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume legislative session.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:37 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Mr. PORTMAN).

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.J. Res. 69.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to H.J. Res. 69, a joint resolution providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is on agreeing to the motion.

The motion was agreed to.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL OF A RULE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the joint resolution.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A joint resolution (H.J. Res. 69) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the final rule of the Department of the Interior relating to "Non-Subsistence Take of Wildlife, and Public Participation and Closure Procedures, on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I rise to encourage my colleagues to rescind a recently promulgated regulation by the Obama administration and to support the corresponding resolution of disapproval that the majority leader just brought up and that we unanimously moved forward to debate, H.J. Res. 69.

There are few, if any, people in the world who love their lands and wildlife more than Alaskans. In Alaska, our land is the lifeblood that sustains us, that feeds our bodies, our families, and our souls. It is a deep and enduring part of our culture.

Our hunting traditions are very much alive in Alaska. Alaskans hunt for food for cultural reasons and even for survival. There are people in my State whose families have called our beautiful and rugged lands home for thousands of years, living side-by-side with more recent arrivals. Alaska has also the well-earned reputation of having one of the best managed, most sustainable fish and game populations anywhere in America or anywhere in the world, for that matter. We have an abundance of wildlife that most States and most countries can only dream of. We do this year after year, generation after generation, through rigorous scientific processes that allow and encourage public participation through our Board of Game, Board of Fisheries, and our Fish and Game Department to make sure we manage our fish and game for sustainability, as required by the Alaska constitution, and that we take into account the needs of our citizens—the needs of Alaskans. It is not an easy process. It can be contentious, but all Alaskans take this very seriously.

In Alaska, we respect the land and everything in it. That special connection and our ability to manage our own lands and resources was explicitly recognized in Federal law when Alaska became a State. The Alaska Statehood Act passed in this body in 1958, specifically granting Alaska the authority to manage fish and wildlife on not only State lands but on Federal lands, unless Congress passes a law to the contrary. By the way, that is the same authority granted to all States. It is granted to Ohio, New Mexico—all States in America have this authority.

Further, in 1980, this body, the Congress of the United States, passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, designating 100 million acres of land, in my great State, as Federal conservation units, including over 70 million acres—I believe larger than the State of New Mexico—as wildlife refuges in one State.

Many Alaskans didn't like this bill. Several saw this as a massive Federal usurpation of our land, but our congressional delegation fought to include explicit provisions in this Federal law that made it abundantly clear that the State of Alaska still had primacy in managing fish and game throughout the entire State—State lands and Federal lands.

When that act was passed, it explicitly stated: "Nothing in this act is intended to enlarge or diminish the responsibility and authority of the State of Alaska for the management of fish and wildlife on public lands. . . ."

That is pretty clear language, and it is very important language to Alaskans. ANILCA is the statute we are talking about, and that is what we call it in Alaska. That Federal law that passed in 1980 made numerous other commitments to Alaskans about how the Federal Government would not usurp the power of the State or our citizens to live the life we have in Alaska. How quickly the Feds forget. How quickly the Feds forget what this law requires.

On August 5, 2016, the Obama administration's Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a rule that, No. 1, restricted certain State-approved fish and game management practices; No. 2, limited public input in the wildlife management process; and, No. 3, expanded closure procedures on refuges in Alaska, making it easier to keep people shut out of these Federal lands in our State.

This rule is not based on sound science. Thousands of Alaskans and other Americans opposed it, tried to work with the Feds to get them to moderate it or rescind it, to no avail. It is not based on established wildlife management principles, and it is certainly not based on Federal law. The Fish and Wildlife Service didn't take this action because Alaska's sustainable and abundant populations of fish and game or their habitats were being threatened; it took this action because it wanted to control Alaska's fish and wildlife and because it subjectively disapproved of the way Alaska's game was being managed by our Department of Fish and Game and by the Alaska Board of Game, but the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service does not have this authority.

To make this clear, we are proceeding today with this resolution of disapproval under the Congressional Review Act, H.J. Res. 69, to rescind that August 5 Obama Fish and Wildlife Service rule.

The House has already passed this measure under Congressman DON YOUNG's leadership. So I want to encourage all of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, to vote in favor of this resolution. It is backed by the force of law, the principles of federalism, and respect for the Alaskan Native people who have been hunting and fishing, subsisting off the land in Alaska for generations. It is also supported by millions of Americans across the country and wildlife professionals in every State in the Union who are committed to the conservation of the abundant species of wildlife in my home State and in theirs.

Why should my colleagues support rescinding this Fish and Wildlife Service regulation? Well, first and foremost, as I have already mentioned, it clearly usurps power from the States