

State of South Dakota

SEVENTY-SEVENTH SESSION
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 2002

435H0763

HOUSE ENGROSSED NO. **HCR 1018** - 02/14/2002

Introduced by: Representatives Teupel, Duenwald, Hennies (Thomas), Juhnke, Lintz, McCoy, Napoli, Peterson (Bill), and Rhoden and Senators Apa, Bogue, Greenfield, McCracken, and Vitter

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, Expressing the sense of the South Dakota State Legislature
2 about management of the Black Hills National Forest.

3 WHEREAS, catastrophic wildfires not only cause environmental damage to forests and other
4 lands but place the lives of firefighters at risk and pose threats to human health, personal
5 property, sustainable ecosystems, wildlife habitat, air quality, and water quality; and

6 WHEREAS, the seriousness of the fire risk in the national forests has been well documented
7 by both the General Accounting Office and the United States Forest Service; and

8 WHEREAS, research and experience have shown that forest management, including
9 thinning, forest restoration, grazing, measures to control insects and disease, and small-scale
10 prescribed burning, can be an effective long-term strategy for reducing the risk of catastrophic
11 wildfires and insect epidemics, especially in ponderosa pine forests, such as the Black Hills
12 National Forest; and

13 WHEREAS, the mountain pine beetle epidemic now occurring in the Black Hills National
14 Forest has already increased the risk of forest fires in the Black Hills, possibly endangering the



1 lives and property of the citizens of South Dakota; and

2 WHEREAS, the national forests are the property of all the residents of the United States, but
3 the residents who live the closest to the national forests are the ones who will be the most
4 impacted by decisions about how to manage those national forests; and

5 WHEREAS, since the inception of the National Forest System, its supporters have
6 recognized the importance of the support of local residents; and

7 WHEREAS, local governments and residents of South Dakota now find themselves
8 extremely frustrated at the failure of the Forest Service to deal proactively with the mountain
9 pine beetle epidemic in the Black Hills, and especially with the Forest Service's inclination to base
10 decisions more on directives and policies from Washington, D.C., than on the management needs
11 of the Black Hills National Forest or the concerns and issues of local communities and
12 governments in South Dakota; and

13 WHEREAS, a measure of this frustration has been the overwhelming support for the
14 concepts embodied in House Bill 1236, which was introduced during the 2002 Session of the
15 South Dakota Legislature:

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the House of Representatives of the Seventy-
17 seventh Legislature of the State of South Dakota, the Senate concurring therein, that, in the
18 interest of protecting the health and integrity of United States forests, wildlife habitats,
19 watersheds, air quality, human health and safety, and private property, the United States should
20 redefine its working relationship with state and local governments, communities, and residents
21 of South Dakota to ensure that the people who will be the most affected by United States Forest
22 Service decisions will receive the highest level of consideration in those decisions; and

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the United States Forest Service should:

24 (1) Fully implement the Western Governors Association "Collaborative 10-year Strategy

1 for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment" to reduce
2 overabundance of forest fuels that place these resources at high risk of catastrophic
3 wildfire; and

4 (2) Utilize an appropriate mix of fire-prevention activities and management practices
5 including forest restoration, thinning of at-risk forest stands, grazing, selective tree
6 removal and other measures to control insects and pathogens, removal of excessive
7 ground fuels, and small-scale prescribed burns; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that South Dakota's Congressional Delegation is requested
9 to help enact legislation that will allow the United States Forest Service to implement on-the-
10 ground steps to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire in Beaver Park and other high risk areas
11 in the Black Hills National Forest prior to the 2002 fire season; and

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Black Hills National Forest should be strongly
13 considered for designation as a "Charter Forest," as presented in the President's FY 2003 Budget
14 Request to Congress; and

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State is hereby authorized and directed
16 to forward a copy of this Resolution to the Honorable President of the United States, George
17 W. Bush; the Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Venneman; the United States Forest Service Chief,
18 Dale N. Bosworth; the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
19 of the United States Congress; and the Congressional Delegation representing the State of South
20 Dakota in the Congress of the United States.