



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Governor Fights Misuse of Endangered Species Act

November 18, 2009, Anchorage Alaska – Recognizing that resource development jobs in Alaska face a serious threat from environmental groups, Governor Sean Parnell today announced he is committing additional resources to fight the misuse of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The governor's proposed operating budget for Fiscal Year 2011 will include a new attorney position at the Department of Law solely dedicated to ESA issues. The governor will also include \$800,000 for outside legal counsel to help with the effort.

In his speech to the Resource Development Council's 30th annual conference, the governor vowed to fight political forces that threaten to bring resource development in Alaska to a halt.

"The Endangered Species Act is not a land-use planning tool and must not be used to complicate, delay, and ultimately halt energy exploration and production in Alaska," Governor Parnell said. "We'll take Alaska's fight to the mat to make sure the ESA is used only to protect species threatened with extinction and not as a tool to lock up our land."

The state is litigating the listing of the polar bear as a threatened species, intervening in a lawsuit filed to block a state commercial salmon fishery occurring near endangered humpbacked whales, and responding to petitions regarding other species and proposed designations of critical habitat.

Audio from the governor's speech to the Resource Development Council is available at: http://www.gov.state.ak.us/audio/RDCspeech_Nov18-2009.mp3.

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