CITY OF CORDOVA, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 05-11-21

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORDOVA, ALASKA COMMEMORATING THE CORDOVA COAL PARTY OF MAY 4, 1911, FOCUSING ATTENTION ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S CURRENT STRANGLEHOLD ON ALASKA, AND CALLING ON THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR, U.S. SENATE, AND CONGRESS TO DEVELOP COMMON SENSE POLICIES THAT ALLOW ALASKA AND THE REST OF THE NATION TO UTILIZE THE NATION'S ABUNDANT RESOURCES IN A SAFE, ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND MANNER THAT SERVES THE BEST INTERESTS OF AMERICANS

WHEREAS, as part of his "Progressive thinking," President Theodore Roosevelt issued an executive order in 1906 prohibiting additional coal mining within the public domain in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, coal reserves were further locked up by the creation of the Chugach National Forest in 1907 and its subsequent expansion to include the bulk of the Bering River coal fields around Katalla; and

WHEREAS, President William Howard Taft, who succeeded Theodore Roosevelt as President of the nation, continued these same policies and the coal remained untouchable; and

WHEREAS, for Alaska, the coal reservations had the effect of not only impeding mining operations but also construction of railroads and other important development; and

WHEREAS, railroads, steamships, and locals were paying $11.00 to $12.00 per ton for imported coal when high-grade coal was readily available from the Bering fields for $2.50 to $3.50 per ton; and

WHEREAS, coal tonnage that was historically a ready and reliable source of freight revenue for the West's railroads was unavailable to railroads in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, nowhere was the resentment over the actions by Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and William Taft higher than in Cordova, where the completion of the Copper River an Northwestern Railway to Kennecott was supposed to be the first step in ensuring a route that led all the way to Fairbanks; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 1911, with visions of tea being dumped into Boston Harbor on December 16, 1773, three hundred Cordova businessmen and citizens armed themselves with shovels and marched to the wharf of the Alaska Steamship Company and proceeded to shovel several hundred tons of imported British Columbia coal into Orca Bay; when Richard J. Barry, the company's general agent, demanded that this "Cordova Coal Party" cease, he was met with continued shoveling and shouts of "Give us Alaska Coal;" and

WHEREAS, there were indeed parallels to be drawn between the Cordova Coal Party and the Boston Tea Party; some, including the *Seattle Times*, were quick to point out the decidedly Alaskan character of the Cordova affair: The Bostonians of 1773 had gone "in the dead of night . . . and disguised as Indians," the paper noted, whereas the Alaskans marched unabashedly in broad daylight; even the far-off *Philadelphia Bulletin* called the event" a demonstration of a not unreasonable impatience with the dilatory federal policy relating to the development of Alaskan resources;"

WHEREAS, in nearby Katalla, which was still hoping to become the gateway to the Bering coal fields, Gifford Pinchot was burned in effigy amid a flurry of posters plastered around town that proclaimed:

PINCHOT, MY POLICY

Not patents to coal lands!
All timber in forest reserves!
Bottle up Alaska!
Save Alaska for all time to come!

WHEREAS, the words proclaimed in Katalla were mild compared to what journalist George E. Baldwin later wrote about Pinchot after the forester visited Alaska: "When the high priest of conservation, the prince of shadow dancers, recently visited Alaska to gloat over his handiwork of empty houses, deserted villages, dying towns, arrested development, bankrupt pioneers, and blasted hopes of sturdy, self-reliant American citizens, it is a striking comment on the law-abiding character of our people that he came back at all;" and

WHEREAS, a century after the Cordova Coal Party, federal involvement in Alaska continues to obstruct and stop the development of the vast resources of the state; and

WHEREAS, the United States, particularly Alaska, has huge storehouses of energy that lie untapped due to misguided federal policies as recently addressed by Congressman Devin Nunes:

> [H.R. 5899, A Roadmap for America's Energy Future] expands oil production in the far reaches of northern Alaska, off our shores, and in the lower 48 states through oil shale deposits.
>
> "Due to misguided government policies, many of our domestic energy resources sit idle, untapped and underutilized. The United States has an estimated two trillion barrels of oil shale. This is more than seven times the amount of crude oil reserves found in Saudi Arabia, and is enough to meet current U.S. demand for over 200 years. Tapping this homegrown resource would not only help address a huge component of our domestic energy needs, but would provide thousands of new jobs throughout the West- a region currently suffering from the highest comprehensive unemployment in the country. With soaring unemployment and rising energy costs, it's time we put Americans back to work and domestic resources into play. That is precisely what the Energy Roadmap does;

and

WHEREAS, the federal government, through its misguided policies has:

1) damaged not only Alaska's economic future but that of our entire country by not developing the energy reserves of Alaska and the rest of the nation;
2) exported our money instead of keeping our money at home;
3) outsourced our energy jobs to other countries instead of hiring Americans;
4) increased our debt and inflated our currency;
5) increased our negative trade imbalance; and
6) relied on other countries including those whose interests are often adversarial to the United States to set the price for energy supplies;

NOW, THEREFORE, IN CONSIDERATION OF THE ABOVE FACTS, IT IS RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF CORDOVA, ALASKA as follows:

Section 1. That the City of Cordova recognizes May 4, 2011, as the 100th anniversary of the Cordova Coal Party patriots who took symbolic action to focus attention on the fact that the federal government's misguided policies were actively damaging Alaska's future.

Section 2. One hundred years later, the City Council of the City of Cordova passes this resolution to focus attention on the fact that the federal government has worsened its stranglehold on Alaska and continues to actively damage not only Alaska's future but the future of the entire nation through continued misguided policies.

Section 3. The City Council calls on the President of the United States, the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, the U.S. Senate, and Congress to develop common sense energy policies, land use policies, and other public policies that allow Alaska and the rest of the nation to utilize their abundant energy resources in a safe, environmentally sound manner that serves the best interests of Americans.

Section 4. This resolution is effective immediately.

Section 5. A copy of this resolution shall be provided immediately to:

1) President Barack Obama,
2) U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar,
3) Senator Lisa Murkowski,
4) Senator Mark Begich,
5) Congressman Don Young, and
6) Congressman Devin Nunes.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 4th DAY OF MAY, 2011.

Jim Kallander, Mayor

ATTEST:

Susan Bourgeois, City Clerk

CITY OF CORDOVA CORPORATE SEAL JULY 8, 1909 ALASKA