

THIS INDEPENDENCE DAY

TWO OP-ED ARTICLES ABOUT THE "CONSERVATION AND REINVESTMENT ACT" (CARA) WHICH CREATES SEVEN TRUST FUND ENTITLEMENTS FOR \$45 BILLION IN NEW AUTOMATIC—GO TO THE HEAD OF THE LINE, TRAMPLE THE WOMEN AND CHILDREN—FEDERAL SPENDING ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS INCLUDING GOVERNMENT ACQUISITION OF PRIVATE LAND.

★ IN FAVOR: CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG (R-Alaska)
★ AGAINST: RAY KREIG - KEEP PRIVATE LANDS IN PRIVATE HANDS COALITION (ALASKA)

Fairbanks (Alaska) Daily News-Miner July 4, 2000 Editorial Page



Legislation bestows lasting Alaska returns

There's been a lot of interesting speculation about my legislation called the Conservation and Reinvestment Act. Numerous stories—and editorials have been written about what this landmark bill would do and why I led the effort to pass such a major conservation package.

Even News-Miner columnist Fred Pratt has devoted a significant amount of attention to CARA and my participation in this process. In his most recent column, he speculated that I wrote the bill to benefit Alaska Native corporations. This was a new and novel theory, but unfortunately, not accurate.

The truth is actually very simple—CARA is good for all Alaskans.

In Alaska and throughout the nation, CARA will increase funding for federal and state conservation and recreation programs, urban parks, historic preservation, and wildlife conservation. The bill also resolves a major inequity regarding the disposition of funds generated from Outer Continental Shelf activities.

Currently, states receive 50 percent of the revenues for on-shore oil production but nothing from the federal waters six miles and beyond a state's coast. CARA corrects this problem by creating new programs that benefit coastal states with the OCS revenues, which have averaged between \$4 to \$5 billion annually.



Rep. Don Young

Guest Opinion

Under CARA, \$2.8 billion of this funding will go toward important recreation, wildlife and conservation programs each year.

In addition, CARA creates new private property protections which go beyond existing law.

Alaska will receive about \$2.5 billion during the 15-year period included in CARA for these programs. Each year, Alaska would receive:

■ \$87 million for coastal conservation programs

■ \$38.5 million for state and federal land conservation under the Land and Water Conservation Fund

■ \$17.5 million for wildlife conservation

■ \$9.8 million in PILT payments

■ \$9 million for federal and Native land restoration

■ about \$1.5 million for historic preservation and endangered species programs

In previous years, the LWCF has helped fund several popular Alaska projects including Alakaland in Fairbanks, the Coastal Trail in Anchorage and Eagle Crest in Juneau. The increased funding for the state programs

under the LWCF will allow for local communities to determine how these funds are spent in their own communities based upon their local priorities, rather than federal dictates.

Despite inaccurate claims by fringe groups like the American Land Rights Association, CARA also includes new private property protections that go beyond existing law. No new federal land can be acquired under CARA without the specific approval of Congress. The federal government can only purchase land from willing sellers—condemnation is not allowed under CARA unless it is specifically approved by Congress. CARA also created new requirements to protect land owners who do not want to sell their land from new regulations.

Additionally, the administration must seek to use land exchanges and conservation easements as alternatives to acquisition. These new protections were included to enhance private property rights in all 50 states.

Despite the noisy opposition by some fringe groups, CARA is supported by thousands of organizations and officials throughout the nation. Last month, CARA was overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. House by a 315 to 102 vote with a majority of both Republicans and Democrats voting for passage of the bill. CARA is supported by all 50 governors, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of

Counties. CARA has also been endorsed by more than 4,500 organizations including numerous conservation, hunting, fishing, and recreation groups like the National Rifle Association, and other organizations like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Realtors.

Alaskans know that over the past 27 years, I have led the effort for the authorization of the trans-Alaska oil pipeline, oil development in Prudhoe Bay and the Coastal Plain, a strong mining industry, and numerous other economic programs in every region of the state.

During this same period, I have also authored numerous important conservation bills including the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation Act and a comprehensive improvement of America's national wildlife refuge system.

In addition, I have authored and supported dozens of bills to promote hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation in our state and the entire nation.

Fred Pratt is correct. CARA and its expanded conservation, wildlife and recreation programs is consistent with my 27-year congressional record of working for Alaskans.

—On the Net: www.house.gov/resources

Don Young has served as Alaska's sole representative in Congress since 1973.

Conservation dollars not worth the price

The Young-Murkowski Conservation and Reinvestment Act is supposed to bring lots of money to Alaska.

Are there any negative consequences? YES!

This bill is going to hurt real people, hurt real communities. Too many CARA proponents don't care about people—all they talk about is money for their agencies, for their pet projects.

Do Alaskans really want a massive increase in government land buying? Already 90 percent government-owned, only 1/3 of 1 percent of Alaska is non-native corporation private land. CARA increases spending for federal land acquisition 15 times.

■ Private inholdings will be wiped out over most areas of National Forests, Parks, Preserves, and Wildlife Refuges. The only landlord will be the federal government. There will be no choices in accommodations or visitor services except possibly federal concessionaires.

■ Communities will be boxed in and extinguished. The cultural and land heritage represented by thousands of individual homesteads, cabins, mining claims, native allotments and some village corporation lands will be gone forever as the lands are acquired over time by the federal government.

We need to have a statewide discussion and make darn sure we have the right answer to the question: Why should even one more acre of private land be transferred to government in Alaska?

Ray
Kreig
Guest Opinion



CARA gives lip service to the idea of states defining their own priorities, but this is negated by giving Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt final approval over use of 85 percent of the CARA money.

Look at the sorry history of ANILCA "guarantees" of access and the promised right of communities, land owners and residents to continue their economic livelihood. It is obvious that Congress has been unable to control abuse by the administrative agencies.

The first of many takings cases caused by National Park Service's abridgement of these ANILCA "guarantees" was recently concluded in Federal District Court. And the NPS imposed final regulations further cutting off access to private lands at Kantishna and declaring an intent to explore restriction of snow machine use in NPS units throughout Alaska.

The recent blizzard of executive orders decreasing roadless areas, extreme environmental regulations and national monument declarations constitutes an intensified war on the West. Is it wise to grant more authority to the Interior Secretary at the same time he is handed a fire hose torrent of new CARA money? Under CARA he even gets to decide how the required

state and local matching funds are spent.

Advocates claim CARA provides "private property protections" that do not exist today.

These so-called "protections" affect only 15 percent of CARA money. Even then, they are of little use.

CARA is written so a fast scanner of the bill will notice catchy property rights protection phrases like, "just compensation," "willing seller requirement," and "nothing...shall authorize...property be taken" etc.

But close reading of the bill reveals these phrases are without operative effect or value, suggesting that their inclusion amounts to a willful attempt at deceiving the public.

Even beyond the federal subsistence takeover, CARA provides the means for increased federal control over remaining fish and game matters in Alaska. And it authorizes funding to environmentalist organizations which have fought for decades to extinguish private property rights and deny federal land access and multiple use.

Worst of all is the assault on responsible management of the public's tax dollars. CARA walls off seven new entitlements that will enshrine \$45 billion in guaranteed new spending for: Government land acquisition, pork-laden coastal area "impact" assistance, environmental groups, professional sports stadiums, wildlife and endangered species, Civil War battlefields, urban parks etc...

All at a protected HIGHER priority than:

Medical research, education, health care, national defense, veterans benefits, violent crime victim compensation, law enforcement, consumer protection, child welfare, and other services people need. These programs still will have to scramble to compete every year for every dollar.

This bill contains so much in conflict with the values shared by most Alaskans—limited government, individual freedom, reducing the government land estate and encouragement of free enterprise—that concerned delegates at the recent State Republican Party convention overwhelmingly passed a resolution against CARA, even though CARA's prime architects are Republican Rep. Don Young and Sen. Frank Murkowski.

Alaskans need to pay attention and carefully scrutinize this claimed CARA largess. Decades of CARA land buying and increasing federal control in our land use decisions will transform huge areas of Alaska. The price we'll pay for it—as Alaskans and as Americans—is too high.

On the Net: Supporting documents: www.landrights.org/ak

Ray Kreig, an Anchorage engineering consultant, is chairman of the Keep Private LANDS in Private HANDS Coalition Alaska.