

Subject: SB105

I am writing to urge you to oppose SB105 that would open up protected and special use areas such as parks, critical habitat areas, sanctuaries to lease or sale for remote cabins. I am traveling at the moment so this is a quick note, but I am 73, moved to Alaska in 1979 and have lived here longer than anywhere in my life. I also spent my career serving the people of Alaska during my career at Fish and Game. These parcels of state land received protection or special designation for important reasons, not on an arbitrary whim. Our state government's duty is to balance the best interests of the state and Alaskans in general with those of individuals. To me this is a clear case of putting a few people's wishes ahead of much larger interests of the special areas and the rest of us who care about such places. The state already has land sales programs to accommodate people wanting parcels without posing serious unintended risks to important lands that were chosen as important to all of us. Sorry about the short email. I'd rather prepare a more thoughtful, better articulated response, but it seemed like timing was important.

Thank you for your work for the people and our state,

John

John Hechtel
PO Box 84535
Fairbanks, AK 99708

Subject: Do Not Pass SB 105A.

Dear Madam Chair and committee members,

I was shocked to see Section 8.2.d of a bill you are hearing on Monday, March 17th: SB 105A, "An Act relating to the lease and sale of state land for recreational cabin sites; and providing for an effective date." While the sale or lease of state land for recreational cabins might appear to be a nice way to share state lands with residents and raise some funds for Alaska, it appears that Section 8.2.d could allow sale or lease of any state park, state forest, state game refuge, state wildlife refuge, state game sanctuary, state recreational area, state recreational river, state wilderness park, state marine park, state special management area, state public use area, critical habitat area, bald eagle preserve, bison range, or moose range lands for cabin site lease or purchase. This would be completely contrary to the reasons for which those lands have been designated state parks, refuges, recreational rivers, public use areas, etc. All these "special areas" have been established after careful consideration by a variety of experienced land managers to provide all Alaskans with valuable services that, for the most part, are incompatible with private ownership. Allowing individuals to occupy small parcels scattered throughout these valuable lands would certainly degrade the values and purposes for which they have been established.

A number of other problems would occur with this proposal. Alaska is in the midst of a serious financial crisis. Our schools have not been adequately funded for years, we are losing population because we do not provide a reasonable defined benefits program for our public employees, public safety suffers due to vacancies and continuing staff departures, and our roads and other infrastructure are falling apart. Economists warn that we may see a recession in our state, if not across the whole nation. While the fiscal note for this bill estimates a relatively modest cost up front, it projects hiring of 5 new full time positions and annual costs of \$777,000 by 2028. Given the potential administrative, management, and legal demands this seems a drastic underestimate. Overseeing a bunch of newly created private inholdings scattered throughout parks, critical habitat areas, and other lands designated for specific public uses could turn out to be a management nightmare. How many new staff positions would it really require? Not to mention the cost of litigation by those who do not like this idea, which seems like it could be illegal given the existing designated uses for these special state lands. Enforcing hunting, trapping, and other existing regulations, while working around a patchwork of private inholdings, would not come cheap.

Please consider all this and at least amend this bill to exclude all of those lands listed in Section 8.

Sincerely,

David Irons

17053 Aries Court

Anchorage, AK 99516

To Members of the Senate Resource Committee:

If passed, Senate Bill 105 has the potential for destroying Alaska's universal draw for visitors and residents alike — its expanses of pristine wilderness currently untamed by the presence of humanity. Please do not allow this landscape to be butchered for the benefit of the few over the many. The protections we have in place now keep these lands desirable on a much broader scale than the mere ownership of property.

Thank you for listening,

Dianne Spence-Chorman

(Alaska resident since 1979)

39960 Highview Court

Homer, AK 99603

Subject: In opposition of SB 150

Hello,

I am writing you in opposition of SB 150. Please don't sell our precious wilderness to private interests.

Thank you

Kate Fitzgerald

Subject: Opposed to SB 105

The Alaska State Park lands and protected areas are public lands that belong equally to every resident of Alaska. I am opposed to SB 105.

The Alaska State Parks and protected areas are well-used and appreciated by Alaska residents and by visitors from outside of Alaska and from other countries.

The State Parks and protected areas are economic drivers, raising revenue from Alaska residents and from those people outside of Alaska.

From its innovative establishment and public participation in planning in early Statehood to its thoughtful management over these decades since statehood, the Alaska State Park system is unique in this way in the United States and is the envy of other States' park managers and users.

The Alaska State Park and protected areas system reaches all types of visitors - from the small historic sites and many land areas large enough that support habitat for so many species of animals to live, feed, and migrate in a natural rhythm.

An intangible value that cannot be measured is the pride and satisfaction that Alaskans can hold having a State system admired worldwide. For many Alaskans, just driving through Denali State Park corridor or pulling off on a roadside to picnic or fish or flying over areas like Wood Tikchik, or pondering maps in a classroom - these are all part of what we have learned and appreciated that our State Parks System gives to each of us equally, as individuals.

Offering up land for sale within our State Park system goes against the very idea that our State Parks belong to every individual equally. That does not mean that someone has the power and greater ownership rights because they pay money to buy those pieces of public land set aside for the public as a whole. How can these lands be sold off by the State, if indeed, these lands belong to every citizen of the State?

I imagine this Senate Bill 105 is intended to raise money for the State but it also has the appearance that the Bill is also intended to allow people who have the means and are desiring and pressuring the State administration and Legislature to buy our shared public land for their private use.

I am strongly opposed to SB 105. The Alaska State Park lands are public lands that belong equally to every resident of Alaska.

Nancy Deschu, Anchorage, Alaska

Subject: SB 105

Madame Chair,

I oppose SB105, at the very least the disposal of 10 acre recreational sites. There is already a process in place for disposal of state land for recreational cabin sites in the Copper River Basin. DNR held meetings and solicited comments last spring and is in the process of devising a plan based on the input received from the local communities. HB109 should exclude the disposal of recreational cabin sites pending completion of the Copper River Basin Area Plan. I have attached a letter from the community addressed to Kevin Husa at DNR with 60 signatures of McCarthy residents which is a majority of year round residents that reside of own cabins in McCarthy.

I appreciate you taking the time to read and consider the implications of state land disposal around small communities like McCarthy. Please share this with all Senate members attending the hearing today at 3:30 pm.

Kelly Bay

McCarthy, Alaska

June 5, 2023

From: Kelly Bay

PO Box MXY

McCarthy, AK 99588

To: Alaska Department of Natural Resources

550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1050

Anchorage, AK 99501

Attn: Kevin Husa

RE: Unit Number W-16 of the Public Review Draft Copper River Basin Area Plan (CRBAP), near McCarthy, Alaska

Dear Kevin and whom it may concern:

We appreciate all of the efforts that the DNR Planning Team has made to take public comment on the revised CRBAP. After review and much discussion, the undersigned McCarthy area residents and land owners respectfully request that the approximately 8,000 acres of W-16 land bounded on the west by the Kennicott River and on the south by the Nizina River be classified as Rd - Public Recreation and Tourism-Dispersed.

This approximately 8,000 acre tract of land is invaluable to the surrounding communities and is of tremendous benefit to the public at large under state ownership. The DNR proposed classification of Se would eliminate the last remaining DNR managed land in this area, leaving only private and federal lands. The Se designation would threaten the esthetic values of one of McCarthy's three remaining means of access to the rest of the park, namely the road to Kennicott and beyond, rafting and fly-ins, and the existing unmaintained DOT road between McCarthy Creek and the Nizina River.

The following are some of the benefits of classifying this land as Rd instead of Se:

1. The Rd designation preserves the land for local and public recreation options in the future. By designating the land Se, those options are at risk. The National Park Service land surrounding McCarthy has proven to be subject to increasing restrictions over time, and more restrictive rules can be implemented by the NPS in the future. This makes it critical to the community and public at large for the state to retain ownership of this land for local and public use.

2. Future visitation to McCarthy and Kennicott is expected to continue to grow, as this area has become a major travel destination. Reserving this land for future public recreation and tourism will have great benefits to the area in the long term, including taking pressure off Kennicott and surrounding areas and keeping open the possibility of enhanced hiking trails, camping, bicycling, and other outdoor activities south of McCarthy. With the Rd designation, this area will provide an alternative to National Park Service (NPS) managed land and help distribute visitors throughout the greater McCarthy area. Classifying this land for disposal (i.e., Se), would restrict future tourism opportunities to keep up with growth of this rapidly growing industry.

3. Much of the wildlife in the McCarthy area has been displaced by development. However, the 8,000 acres discussed here comprise a relatively untouched area which is part of a diverse habitat, supporting an abundance of wildlife such as black and grizzly bear, moose, lynx, coyote, wolf, and more. The four species of migratory thrushes (including robins) nest in the boreal forest that includes this area. Ravens and gray jays thrive in the area throughout the year, and eagles are attracted in abundance during salmon spawning time. Disposal of state land by virtue of designating it Se will adversely affect wildlife habitat in this area.

4. The community of McCarthy relies on state land to harvest firewood, wild game, berries, and other plants that can be sourced locally. These uses on NPS land have been impacted by increasingly restrictive rules and permit requirements since the park was established and are likely to become even more restrictive over time. We believe that under the Rd designation, subsistence activities managed by State of Alaska will continue to be a sustainable part of the culture of the McCarthy area and accessible to all Alaskans.

5. Designation of this land as Se can be expected to raise major infrastructure issues for the local community as well as have unintended demands on the state budget. Such infrastructure issues include the need for permanent vehicle bridges over the Kennicott River and McCarthy Creek, significantly improved public access and parking in McCarthy and Kennicott, and significant improvements and maintenance for the Nizina Road.

6. A consideration that cannot be overlooked is that increased settlement of this land will open it up to development that has the potential to forever change the character of the greater McCarthy area. McCarthy is like no other area in the state. It is truly an Alaskan treasure. The existing community complexion is important to not only those of us who live

here, but McCarthy also serves as an attraction to the outside world and to those that wish to visit the area. Increasing settlement over time is a threat to maintaining this as the very special place it is.

Based on the discussion we have presented here, we strongly recommend that the state adopt the Rd designation for the 8,000 acres directly south of McCarthy for future public use and recreation.

Thank you for your serious consideration.

Kelly Bay

McCarthy, Alaska

I firmly oppose moving forward with SB105! The bill as written seems a sloppy, quick grab for revenue with little input from the public that the lands in question belong to. The bill's definition of resident is far too broad and subject to future exploitation by large outside interests that are very savvy at circumventing laws that are not clearly defined and regulated. There is also far too little time allotted for public comment and push back around location of lots for sale. Take this bill back to the drawing board, it's grossly negligent, as written, in protecting Alaska's wilderness areas and the public that live nearby who invested in their property because it was near protected lands.

Annie Williams

39341 Brenmark RD #2

Homer, AK 99603

907 399 7087

Dear Members of the Alaska Senate Resources Committee:

Please strongly OPPOSE SB 105 today in Senate Resources Committee. Sales or leases in State Parks is wrong for many reasons. The Alaska State Parks are jewels in Alaska, and none of them would be possible to create today.

The Alaska State Park system is a vital part of Alaska's tourism industry, and selling or leasing off chunks would have a negative impact on their integrity and visitors' experiences.

If generating funds for park maintenance is the goal, there are many other ways to achieve that goal: Increased user fees and the Department of Natural Resources' increased activities to generate higher degrees of volunteers are just two. You might also examine how the cruise and airline industry in Alaska who bring thousands of visitors might also help prevent this idea of sales or leases.

Hopefully this legislation is not promoted so that those industries can be the purchasers and/or lessors.

Please OPPOSE SB 105.

Thank you and regards,

Landa Baily

Homer, Alaska

Robin Dublin

Basher Dr

I am opposed to SB105. It will result in reduced public access, have long term negative impacts on wildlife conservation, privatize what is in public interest. Please vote No on SB 105.

Hilary Morgan

Basher Dr

I oppose SB 105. Selling public land limits access for recreation and threatens wildlife habitats. Privatization harms conservation, local economies, and tourism. It prioritizes industrial development over sustainable practices, jeopardizing long-term ecological balance. State-managed public lands ensure balanced use and protection, benefiting both the environment and future generations.

Re: SB105 Public Comment.

To the members of the Senate Resources Committee, for the record:

I understand that you will be opening a hearing on SB105 for public comment. Following are my comments. Kindly include them in the record.

I am astonished by the proposal to negate the purposes for which certain public land designations were established earlier by this state.

Wildlife: A great many of these lands were specifically designed to protect wildlife and their habitats. It was recognized at the time of their creation—often several decades ago—that healthy wildlife populations depend on good habitat. Alaskans, in turn, benefit when wildlife benefits, whether Alaskans view wildlife or depend on them for subsistence. Visitors also come here to see our wildlife, and that benefits local business. With climate change, wildlife face additional challenges and some populations are already severely diminished. (I certainly see this in the Copper River Basin.) They need good habitat more than ever, both for their own sake and for the sake of Alaskans.

Public Recreation: Others of these lands were designated for public recreation because the public wanted to be able to recreate on public lands and waters. These outdoor activities promote a healthier and happier public; they are not a frill to be cast aside.

So what's wrong with opening these lands to personal use cabins and recreational cabin sites?

They cease to be wildlife habitat. Mammals are scared off from places where they used to feed and travel; birds are scared off from places where they used to nest. They don't just lose the land where a cabin stands, but also the land that becomes roads and trails. Many scientific studies have documented that sight, sound, and scent of humans have deleterious effects on wildlife use.

They cease to be public lands, no longer available to the public to enjoy.

They will increase forest fire risk. They would be new sources of wildfires—a very costly problem for the state.

This bill, if passed, would surely result in a multitude of lawsuits very costly for the state to try to defend.

Sincerely,

Ruth McHenry

HC60 Box 306T

Copper Center, AK 99573

Beth Rosenberg

Arctic Blvd

Rep. Holland and Sen. Giessel-- Please register my strong opposition to SB105, in which the Governor is attempting to sell public lands to private interests. Please keep these valuable lands available to ALL Alaskans, as they are now. Please vote NO on SB105.

Diane Schenker

BASHER DR

I strongly oppose SB105.

SB105 would privatize what is in the public's interest! It will have long-term negative impacts on wildlife conservation. Why would we want to reduce public control, access, and management transparency/accountability over public lands?

Please vote NO on SB 105.

Thank you!