

## **House Bill 91**

Testimony before the State of Alaska, House Resources Committee

April 2, 2012 – Juneau, Alaska

by

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1.           The reason House Bill 91 is a citizen’s initiative is because it had to be. While I mean no disrespect, I am very concerned about the future viability of HB 91.
2.           The Alaska Division of Forestry has been reluctant to step up to its responsibilities to attempt to mitigate potential accelerated landslide activity on the public by trying on its own to acquire statutory authority to do so.
3.           The Board of Forestry itself has on a number of occasions expressed opposition to amend the Forest Resources and Practices Act to include public safety.
4.           As a consequence, I am concerned that the Board of Forestry will not take the initiative to recommend the State of Alaska adopt any meaningful best management practices.
5.           While I feel that the expertise to manage timber harvests within inhabited landslide hazard areas should exist within the Division of Forestry I have yet to see the will to do so.
6.           Because of my long and exhausting involvement on this issue, on behalf of the Mitkof Highway Homeowners Association, I have no illusions remaining that common sense will prevail beyond the Legislature. That is where my distrust of the word “appropriate”, Lines 12 and 14 on Page 2 of HB 91, as a substitute for our original word “strict” evolves from.

7. I would ask that the House Resources Committee consider that the highest priority safety standards be substituted for “appropriate” because the intent of HB 91 is preventive. If “appropriate” remains in the bill, then I would ask for a definition of the phrase “appropriate safety standards” to be added to the Forest Resources Practices Act. For example, “appropriate safety standards” means “standards which provide the maximum use consistent with the public interest, taking into consideration as the highest priority the public safety of all individuals and communities who could be affected by timber harvest and logging operations.”
8. As it has turned out, people were encouraged by the State and Federal governments to settle in what are now recognized as landslide hazard areas. It is your task to safeguard the public and I fear that there is too much ambiguity in the word “appropriate” for you to succeed.
9. Thank you, Mr. Chair and Committee members, for providing me this opportunity to speak in support of HB 91.
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