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**February 14, 2011 Alaska State House Resources Committee Hearing**
**HB 105: Authorizing Additional Acreage to the Southeast State Forest**
**(Resource Committee Co-Chairs: Representative Eric Feige and Paul Seaton)**

**Mr. Chairman - I am John A. Sandor with my home at 3311 Foster Avenue, in Juneau, Alaska. I first came to Alaska on an assignment with the U. S. Forest Service in 1953 and served as the Regional Forester of the Alaska Region from 1976 to my retirement from that agency in 1984. I also served as Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation from 1990-1994. I am submitting this testimony as an individual - a Certified Forester and life-time member of the Society of American Foresters.**

**I support HB 105 - which will add 23,181 Acres of State lands to the 25,291 acre existing State Forest which was established last year. This expanded State Forest of 48,472 acres will enable the Department of National Resources Division of Forestry to sustainably managed the timber, fisheries, wildlife, waters, recreation, and other multiple benefits that will strengthen the local economy, provide jobs, and improve the quality of life of the communities living in the vicinity of these existing state lands.**

**Since the closure of the two Southeast Alaska pulp mills during the 1990's and the loss of an integrated forest product industry in this region, employment and population levels have significantly declined.**

**Since a forestry staff was established in the Department of Natural Resources shortly after Alaska achieved Statehood, the Department of Natural Resources has had an exemplary record of working with local communities in the protection and management of their local forests. This new Southeast State Forest will provide the local communities with new opportunities to improve their economy and quality of life.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 105.**

**John A. Sandor, CF**

# The past and future of the Tongass

By DR. WALTER SOBOLEFF

*My Turn*

When I was born in Killisnoo, in 1908, the Tongass National Forest had just celebrated its first birthday. President Theodore Roosevelt set aside this land and water when Killisnoo was a bustling, productive community which produced much wealth. We processed everything from herring to whales and used everything from blueberries to Sitka Spruce. Nearby Angoon provided labor to Killisnoo, to canneries in Hood Bay, Hawk Inlet and the mines in Juneau. A coal mine was worked in Angoon as trees were cut to provide for buildings, heating and docks. We utilized our resources.

President Roosevelt, the great conservationist, proclaimed:

"And now, first and foremost you can never forget for a moment what is the object of our forest policy. That is not to preserve the forests because they are beautiful, though that is good in itself, not because they are refuges for the wild creatures of the wilderness, though that too is good in of itself; but the primary object of our forest policy, as the land policy of the United States, is making of prosperous homes. It is part of the traditional policy of home making in our country. Every other consideration comes as secondary. You yourselves have got to keep this practical object before your minds; to remember that a forest which contributes nothing to the wealth, progress or safety of the country is of no interest to the government and should be of little interest to the forester. Your attention must be directed to the preservation of the forests, not an end in itself, but as a means of preserving and increasing the prosperity of the nation."

As we, the people and communities of the Tongass spent the next 50 years working together to share in this wealth with the United States, we mostly got along. Some newcomers were not friendly and brought bad manners with them and worse. Nonetheless, we welcomed them as we worked our fisheries, our timberlands and local mines while continuing our customary and traditional activities which have sustained us from the beginning. The economy prior to statehood offered the people of Southeast choices, something we no longer seem to have despite many advances in health care and many dollars spent on education.

With statehood, the Tongass and then I turned 50. The promise of a brighter future shone as we Alaskans would finally be "equal." The federal government invested in clean hydro-electric projects planned to power all our communities with affordable electricity. Alaskan Natives would be able to settle our claims for loss of aboriginal rights and for the first time stand side by side with Alaskans who homesteaded their lands. We understood from watching the treatment of our brothers and sisters in the Lower 48 that broken promises were the rule but we still believed this need not be so.

So, the Tongass just celebrated its 100th and Alaska is coming up on its 50th which is way too fast for my liking and I ask where we are today? Are we walking side by side with our fellow citizens, our fellow Alaskans? Do we have the opportunities that existed prior to Statehood? Are we able to utilize our lands and waters as a means to create energy, jobs and wealth for our families?

Our villages today suffer in a way I have never seen. Angoon fights for its survival. As a member of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and a witness to the work of the Lord, I have found the energy to share openly, firmly and with resolve the need to address the condition of our people with those who have come to live with us. Sadly, our work is not nearly done.

The federal government controls the land in Southeast Alaska and we rely on their word and commitment in our dealings. The Tongass was intended to create the type of wealth and security known from time immemorial by my people. Angoon has survived millennia and overcome many changes and is prepared to continue to contribute if allowed to do so.

• Dr. Walter Soboleff is a Tlingit spiritual leader and elder statesman who lives in Juneau.

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*The publications of the Society are sent gratuitously to all members. Copies of the Proceedings may be obtained of the Secretary for 25 cents each number.*

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# Forestry and Foresters

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

*Delivered before the Society March 26, 1903*

I have felt that the meeting this evening was of such a character as not merely to warrant but to require that I should break through my custom of not going out to make speeches of this sort, for I believe that there is no body of men who have it in their power to-day to do a greater service to the country than those engaged in the scientific study of, and practical application of, approved methods of forestry for the preservation of the woods of the United States. I am glad to see here this evening not only the officials, including the head of the Department of Agriculture, but such men as Governor Richards, who are most concerned in carrying out the policy of the Department of the Interior, because the forest policy of any country must be an essential part of its land policy.

And now, first and foremost, you can never afford to forget for one moment what is the object of our forest policy. That object is not to preserve the forests because



they are beautiful, though that is good in itself, nor because they are refuges for the wild creatures of the wilderness, though that, too, is good in itself; but the primary object of our forest policy, as of the land policy of the United States, is the making of prosperous homes. It is part of the traditional policy of home making of our country. Every other consideration comes as secondary. The whole effort of the Government in dealing with the forests must be directed to this end, keeping in view the fact that it is not only necessary to start the homes as prosperous, but to keep them so. That is why the forests have got to be kept. You can start a prosperous home by destroying the forests, but you cannot keep it prosperous that way.

And you are going to be able to make that policy permanently the policy of the country only in so far as you are able to make the people at large, and, above all, the people concretely interested in the results in the different localities, appreciative of what it means. Impress upon them the full recognition of the value of its policy, and make them earnest and zealous adherents of it. Keep in mind the fact that in a government such as ours it is out of the question to impose a policy like this from without. The policy, as a permanent policy can come only from the intelligent conviction of the people themselves that it is wise and useful; nay, indispensable. We shall decide, in the long run, whether or not we are to preserve or destroy the forests of the Rocky Mountains accordingly as we are or are not able to make the people of the mountain States hearty believers in the policy of forest preservation.

That is the only way in which this policy can be made a permanent success. You must convince the people of the truth—and it is the truth—that the success of home makers depends in the long run upon the wisdom with which the nation takes care of its forests. That seems a strong statement, but it is none too strong.

You yourselves have got to keep this practical object before your minds; to remember that a forest which contributes nothing to the wealth, progress, or safety of the country is of no interest to the Government, and should be of little interest to the forester. Your attention must be directed to the preservation of the forests, not as an end in itself, but as a means of preserving and increasing the prosperity of the nation. "Forestry is the preservation of forests by wise use," to quote a phrase I used in my first message to Congress. Keep before your minds that definition. Forestry does not mean abbreviating that use; it means making the forest useful not only to the settler, the rancher, the miner, the man who lives in the neighborhood, but, indirectly, to the man who may live hundreds of miles off down the course of some great river which has had its rise among the forest-bearing mountains.

The forest problem is in many ways the most vital internal problem in the United States. The more closely this statement is examined the more evident its truth becomes. In the arid regions of the West agriculture depends first of all upon the available water supply. In such a region forest protection alone can maintain the stream flow necessary for irrigation, and can prevent the great and destructive floods so ruinous to communities farther down the same streams.

The relation between the forests and the whole mineral industry is an extremely intimate one; for, as every man who has had experience in the West knows, mines cannot be developed without timber—usually not without timber close at hand. In many regions throughout the arid country, ore is more abundant than wood, and this means that if the ore is of low grade, the transportation of timber from any distance being out of the question, the use of the mine is limited by the amount of timber available.

The very existence of lumbering, of course—and lumbering is the fourth great industry of the United States—depends upon the success of our work as a nation in putting practical forestry into effective operation.



As it is with mining and lumbering, so it is in only a less degree with transportation, manufactures, commerce in general. The relation of all these industries to forestry is of the most intimate and dependent kind.

It is a matter for congratulation that so many of these great industries are now waking up to this fact; the railroads especially, managed as they are by men who are compelled to look ahead, who are obliged by the very nature of their profession to possess a keen insight into the future, have awakened to a clearer realization of the vast importance of the economic use both of timber and of forests.

Even the grazing industry, as it is carried on in the great West, which might at first sight appear to have little relation to forestry, is nevertheless closely related to it, because great areas of winter range, available and good for winter grazing, would be absolutely useless without the summer range in the mountains where the forest reserves lie.

As all of you know, the forest resources of our country are already seriously depleted. They can be renewed and maintained only by the co-operation of the forester with the practical man of business in all his types, but above all, with the lumberman. And the most striking and encouraging fact in the forest situation is that lumbermen are realizing that practical lumbering and practical forestry are allies, not enemies, and that the future of each depends upon the other. The resolutions passed at the last meeting of the representatives of the lumber interests, which occurred here in Washington, were a striking proof of this fact and a most encouraging feature of the present situation. So long as we could not make the men concerned in the great lumber industry realize that the foresters were endeavoring to work in their interest, and not against them,

the headway that could be made was but small. We shall be able to work effectively and bring about important results of a permanent character largely in proportion as we are able to convince those men, the men at the head of that great business, of the practical wisdom of what the foresters of the United States are seeking to accomplish.

In the last analysis, the attitude of the lumberman toward your work will be the chief factor in the success or failure of that work. In other words, gentlemen, I cannot too often say to you, as, indeed, it cannot be too often said to any body of men of high ideals and good scientific training who are endeavoring to accomplish work of worth for the country, that you must keep your ideals high and yet seek to realize them in practical ways.

The United States is exhausting its forest supplies far more rapidly than they are being produced. The situation is grave, and there is only one remedy. That remedy is the introduction of practical forestry on a large scale, and of course that is impossible without trained men, men trained in the closet, and also by actual field work under practical conditions.

You have created a new profession of the highest importance, of the highest usefulness to the State, and you are in honor bound to yourselves and the people to make that profession stand as high as any other profession, however intimately connected with our highest and finest development as a nation. You are engaged in pioneer work in a calling whose opportunities for public service are very great. Treat that calling seriously; remember how much it means to the country as a whole.

The profession you have adopted is one which touches the Republic on almost every side—political, social, industrial, commercial; to rise to its level you will need a wide acquaintance with the general life of the nation, and a view point both broad and high.



Any profession which makes you deal with your fellow-men at large makes it necessary that if you are to succeed you should understand what those fellow-men are, and not merely what they are thought to be by people who live in the closet or the parlor. You have got to know who the men are with whom you are to work, how they feel, how far you can go, when you have to stop, when it is both safe and necessary to push on.

I believe that the foresters of the United States will create a more effective system of forestry than we have yet seen. If not, gentlemen, if you do not, I shall feel that you have fallen behind your brethren in other callings, and I do not believe that you will fall behind them. Nowhere else is the development of a country more closely bound up with the creation and execution of a judicious forest policy. This is, of course, especially true of the West, but it is true of the East also. Fortunately in the West we have been able, relatively to the growth of the country, to begin at an earlier day, so that we have been able to establish great forest reserves in the Rocky Mountains instead of having to wait and attempt to get Congress to pay large sums for their creation, as we are now endeavoring to do in the Southern Appalachians.

In the administration of the national forest reserves, in the introduction of conservative lumbering on the timber tract of the lumberman and the woodlot of the farmer, in the practical solution of forest problems which effect well nigh every industry and every activity of the nation, the members of this society have an unexampled field before them. You have a heavy responsibility—every man that does serious work, work worth doing, has on him a heavy responsibility—for upon the development of your work the development of forestry in the United States and the production of the industries which depend upon it will largely rest. You have made a good beginning, and

I congratulate you upon it. Not only is a sound national forest policy coming rapidly into being, but the lumbermen of the country are proving their interest in forestry by practicing it.

Twenty years ago a meeting such as this to-night would have been impossible, and the desires we here express would have been treated as having no possible relation to practical life. I think that since the present Secretary of Agriculture first came into Congress here there has been a complete revolution in the attitude of the public mind toward this question. We have reached a point where American foresters trained in American forest schools are attacking American forest problems with success. That is the way to meet the larger work you have before you. You must instill your own ideals into the mass of your fellow-men and at the same time show your ability to work with them in practical and business fashion. This is the condition precedent to your being of use to the body politic.