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Governor Sean Parnell
STATE OF ALASKA

January 14, 2011

The Honorable Gary Stevens
President of the Senate
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Stevens,

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to the Southeast State Forest. The Southeast State Forest was established in June 2010, under Chapter 112, SLA 2010, in an effort to ensure that State lands in Southeast Alaska that had already been designated for commercial forestry management would be managed as an integrated unit and according to a broader long-term and comprehensive forest management plan. This bill would designate an additional 23,181 acres of commercial forest lands that are conducive to meeting these goals, almost doubling the size of the Southeast State Forest, and further ensuring an appropriate land base for long-term forest management. The lands would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife harvest and recreational activities.

Adding lands to the Southeast State Forest enables the Division of Forestry in the Department of Natural Resources to manage this land to increase long-term timber supply for local processors and wood energy needs, provide near-term jobs in pre-commercial thinning, timber harvest and milling, and retain the land in State ownership for multiple uses.

The bill contains provisions to avoid conflicts with the newly formed City and Borough of Wrangell's land selection and entitlement. Additionally, if new municipalities are incorporated before June 30, 2019, lands that were vacant, unappropriated, and unreserved before establishment of the State Forest will be included in the calculation of the municipal entitlement acreage, but may not be selected.

Alaska's timber industry and energy needs remain top priorities of my administration. This legislation is one important piece of our overall strategy to stabilize and revitalize the timber industry and expand wood energy opportunities in Southeast Alaska.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sean Parnell".

Sean Parnell
Governor

Enclosure