

Alaska Forest Association, Inc.



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Chris Maisch
State Forester
Alaska Division of Forestry
550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1450
Anchorage, AK 99501

RE: Support of Additional Lands to Southeast State Forest

Dear Chris:

The Alaska Forest Association supports inclusion of an additional 23,181 acres to the Southeast State Forest. The state's timber sale program in Southeast is very small, but very effective. The federal government controls about 94% of the land in Southeast Alaska but they have been supplying only about 20% of the timber that our industry has harvested in the last few years. While State and private timberlands have supplied the other 80%, this has not been sufficient to keep our mills operating. Currently we have only a single medium-size mill still operating in the region along with a handful of very small mills.

Unlike the federal forest management program, the State effort has provided economically viable timber sales on a regular and consistent basis within the constraints of sustained yield principles. In addition to supporting our timber industry the State's timber sale program brings in revenue in the form of stumpage payments that are invested back into the statewide forest management program.

Dedicating more State lands in Southeast Alaska to long-term forest management helps ensure these lands will continue to support the State timber sale program. This helps sustain our remaining timber industry until we can either overcome the impediments that make the federal timber unavailable or until we can persuade Congress to allow the State to own or manage a significant portion of the Tongass. By dedicating lands for long-term forest management the State is better positioned to invest in practices that enhance forest productivity, such as pre-commercial thinning. By increasing the growth and yield from the State Forest, more timber can be supplied to our industry from these lands in perpetuity.

We urge you to support the current efforts to increase the size of the Southern Southeast State Forest.

Sincerely,

Owen Graham
Executive Director
Alaska Forest Association