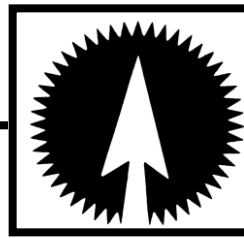


Alaska Forest Association



111 Stedman Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901
Phone: 907-225-6114
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February 21, 2014

Dear Governor Parnell,

The Alaska Forest Association (AFA) has been the primary timber industry association in Alaska since 1957. Our Association mission is to help restore and sustain a viable timber industry in Alaska and to insure our industry members operate their businesses in a responsible manner. AFA maintains a Health Insurance program, a Pension plan, a Scholarship program and AFA sponsors the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program in Alaska

The Alaska Forest Association supports HB 79 – SB 28, which establishes a 763,200 acre Susitna State Forest. Enactment of this State Forest will foster the creation of additional jobs in this region, as explained in the 2012 Jobs and Timber Task Force report.

A stable supply of timber is a necessity for a successful wood manufacturing facility not just to enable financing, but also to attract and maintain a solid customer base. Different sizes, species and quality of trees are suitable for different wood products and a more substantial timber sale program would sustain the existing sawmills and could support more diverse wood products manufacturing facilities as well. Establishment of the Susitna State Forest will enable the State Division of Forestry to manage a larger, more reliable timber sale program that can increase the amount of timber manufacturing and related jobs in this region.

Over the last twenty years the Forest Service has downsized the federal timber sale program in Southeast Alaska by about 90%. Although the State currently manages only about 1% of the timberland in the region, the State timber sale program is very well managed and the State timber sales have allowed at least a few small, and one mid-size sawmill to survive. We are supporting efforts to significantly increase the size of the State Forests in Southeast Alaska because we have confidence in the States forestry program. We are similarly confident that the State will effectively manage the Susitna State Forest lands.

We also believe that the management requirements of the Alaska Forest Practices Act will insure that the water, fish and wildlife in the Susitna State Forest will be maintained and even enhanced, just as they have been in the State Forests in Southeast Alaska. Further, the access that will be provided by the timber sale program will provide additional opportunities for recreation, fire protection and other resource development projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Owen Graham
Executive Director
Alaska Forest Association
111 Stedman Street
Ketchikan, AK 99901