

March 16, 2014

Representative Dan Saddler
State Capitol Room 104
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Representative Saddler:

I am writing to give both my, and my organization's support for the designation of Alaska State land to become the Susitna State Forest as proposed in Alaska House Bill (HB) 79, and Alaska Senate Bill (SB) 28. We are a group of Alaskans who enjoy the outdoors and wild places of Alaska, with an emphasis on the enjoyment of the natural beauty our State provides. We are all lucky to live here, and we should take these important steps to insure that these places will be conserved and managed properly for generations to come. By designating these lands as the Susitna State Forest, a plan can be put in motion to enhance habitat for birds, moose, and a diverse group of other forest creatures, as well as maintain a healthy forest by planned timber harvesting which supplies the industry with product, and provides for healthier forest regrowth. Fire danger and water quality concerns can also be greatly reduced when an active forest management plan is in place.

The benefits of this designation are significant in several ways and include economic benefits to surrounding communities, and with improved planned access, the land is able to be used for diverse activities by the public. With existing access to much of South Central Alaska already made difficult, keeping this land open and available for public use is important to do now, as once other designations for this land are made, it may well be very difficult to change the designation and procure such key properties which are so contiguous, and which allow for this added public access. And actually, we would like to see the boundaries of this proposed forest expanded, and be even more consistent and continuous, encompassing an even larger area if possible.

I respectfully ask for your support of the proposed HB-79. Recreational activity is a large part of the quality of life we are blessed with in Alaska, and a major reason many of us move to, and raise our families here. Keeping this tradition of well managed public lands is essential to our way of life and has been part of the fabric of our history. If established, the Susitna State Forest will be an important and indispensable part of Alaska's future. Please consider your support.

Sincerely,



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