Dear Members of the Susitna Valley Legislative Delegation.

I am writing in support of HB 79 and SB 28, "An act relating to the sale of timber on state land; establishing the Susitna State Forest; and providing for an effective date." This act will put 763, 000 acres into permanent management for forest production, resource development as well as public access. The state forest system is truly a multiple use designation of state land.
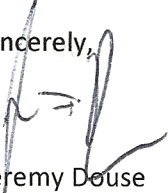
State forests promote small business development and support existing small business in the wood products industry. They benefit the state's economy particularly in rural areas. Timber harvesting outfits, log truck drivers, commercial firewood cutters and value added processing businesses all benefit from state land being placed permanently into management for forest resources.

Also, given the high cost of heating oil, utilization of biomass as a fuel source has gained interest throughout the state. The Division of Forestry has identified this use of the forest resources and understands the benefits that Alaskans can gain by both supporting the fledgling biomass industry in the state and then ultimately reducing home heating costs for Alaskans.

By designating this land into the state forest system, development of infrastructure such as forest roads, bridges and drainages structures can be planned out for future management actions. Such forest planning does not make sense on general state land that could be classified for an incompatible use. Also by designating this land into the state forest system, professional foresters can conduct silvicultural activities that improve the timber resource, improve wildlife habitat, reduce risk of wildfire and ensure sustainability of the forest resource through reforestation techniques.

I hope you will support HB 79 and SB 28. It is a bill that will support an important industry in Alaska, improve public access into state land and ensures the sustainability of the forest resource.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Douse
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