

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION

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SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SB 88

"An Act authorizing a land exchange with the federal government in which certain Alaska mental health trust land is exchanged for certain national forest land and relating to the costs of the exchange; and providing for an effective date."

SB 88 authorizes a land exchange between the Alaska Mental Health Land Trust (AMHT) and the United States Forest Service (USFS). The Trust Land Office has been working with the USFS, affected communities, local interest groups, and the timber industry to accomplish this exchange.

To complete the transfer requires legislation from both the State Legislature and the Congress. SB 88, in conjunction with Senator Lisa Murkowski's S. 131 and Representative Don Young's H.R. 513 details the process of the land exchange, including maps of land parcels, costs that must be paid by the AMHT and other involved parties, the timeline and order of priority for the exchange, and how to handle potential differing value of the final appraisal.

The exchange includes approximately 18,250 acres of AMHT land and approximately 20,500 acres of USFS land.

The swap will allow for the preservation of iconic viewsheds near communities while making available other lands of comparable values towards revenue for the AMHT via timber sales. These timber sales are critical to job creation and the overall economy in Southeast Alaska.

The revenue gained by AMHT will fund programs that serve some of the most vulnerable Alaskans; those who live with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse disorders.

Overall, SB 88 will increase revenue for mental health programs and provide jobs in the timber industry while still protecting iconic lands used for recreation and tourism.

District R

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