

From: Bob Weinstein [bobalaska@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2017 8:35 PM
To: Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Geran Tarr
Cc: Rep. Daniel Ortiz

Subject:

HB 155/Authorizing an Exchange of Alaska Mental Health Trust Lands with the U.S. Forest Service

Dear Representatives Josephson and Tarr:

I am writing in support of HB 155, a bill sponsored by Representative Ortiz to authorize a land exchange between the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the U.S. Forest Service.

One of the parcels involved is Deer Mountain, the iconic backdrop of Ketchikan. A portion of the mountain is owned by the Trust, and is included as part of the proposed exchange.

As a former mayor of the City of Ketchikan and long time resident of Ketchikan, I can say that Deer Mountain is very much valued by the community. When the Trust Board voted last year to log its parcel here and another in Petersburg if federal exchange legislation did not pass by the end of 2016, there was considerable opposition and public outcry. Fortunately, especially as the federal legislation did not pass, the decision was reconsidered, and the Trust has been working with the Congressional delegation on legislation which has been re-introduced this year.

It is my understanding that HB 155 essentially mirrors the federal bill, and that state legislative approval of such exchanges is required. I am therefore not only asking you to support the bill, but also to schedule a hearing and pass the bill out of committee in the near future so it can go through the entire process, including approval by the House in a timely manner.

Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be contacted either by email (bobalaska@gmail.com) or at 907-617-4979 (cell).

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Bob Weinstein
Ketchikan, Alaska