

– House Bill 155 –

Submitted Testimony to House Resources Committee

29 March 2017

by

Charles E. “Ed” Wood

Mitkof Highway Homeowners Association

Petersburg, Alaska 99833

1. Co-Chair Tarr and Co-Chair Josephson, members of the House Resources Committee,
2. My name is Charles Wood, and I am speaking in favor of House Bill 155 as a spokesman and co-founder of the Mitkof Highway Homeowners Association.
3. The MHHA is a group of 95 Petersburg homeowners living below and commuting along State Highway 7, the Mitkof Highway, which lies at the foot of the Trust’s demonstrably steep, unstable, hillside parcels.
4. The soils across the majority of the Trust’s parcels of concern to our group have been shown by the U.S. Forest Service orthophotographic map as landslide hazard soils. The majority of these parcels exceed the Forest Service standards pertaining to logging.
5. The Mitkof Highway corridor below the Trust parcels in question here in Petersburg, have been analyzed and mapped by the Division of Forestry’s Landslide Science & Technical Committee as a landslide hazard zone. The State Division of Forestry has no criteria in its Best Management Practices specific to logging steep unstable slopes within inhabited landslide hazard areas, yet if the Trust were to ever log these slopes, it would do so under the guidance of Alaska’s Forest Resources & Practices Act. This would be totally unacceptable, and in no way “consistent with the public interest”, or “for the maximum benefit of its people”.
6. The sole focus of the MHHA over the past 11 years has been entirely on public safety. Never once have we mentioned view-shed or community backdrop, local

recreational opportunities, wildlife corridor, or tourism, though each of these issues present reasonable arguments in favor of the land exchange.

7. Nor have we offered commentary on the Trust lands next to other communities, or of the Forest Service lands involved with the exchange.
8. Logging the slopes above our homes runs the risk of accelerated landslide activity. Our group has an absolute lack of confidence that the Division of Forestry's Best Management Practices guidelines will provide sufficient safeguards to protect our homes and property from unwise timber harvest. Conversely, we do expect that management of our hillside by the U.S. Forest Service will entail other criteria which will ensure that public safety will not be impacted by logging.
9. Something else which this committee may wish to consider, is that the majority of the population of Southeast Alaska resides in close proximity to the Trust's lands involved with this land exchange. As such, the parcels are clearly more beneficial, for any number of reasons to be left in their natural state for multiple use by the public, which is more likely to occur under Forest Service guidelines and standards.
10. The Mitkof Highway Homeowners Association asks you to support HB 155.
11. Respectfully,
Charles E. "Ed", Co-Founder
Mitkof Highway Homeowners Association
P.O. Box 383
Petersburg, AK 99833-0383
907-772-3480
fvtalon@icloud.com