HB 98 Comments: Relating to Forest Land Use Plans (FLUP) and FLUP appeals

To Chairman Representative Josiah Patkotak and House Resource Committee Members,

This Bill increases the Alaska Department of Natural Resource (DNR) power to offer state land timber sales by elimination of some public processes. In particular I oppose section 4 of the bill which would eliminate the ability of the public to appeal or file a request for reconsideration of a FLUP.

This particular action seems to me to be "sour grapes" by DNR. In 2017, a FLUP was appealed successfully which cancelled a timber sale.
This appeal was righteous and based on very good reasons. So it seems because of that, the administration wants to eliminate an appeal.

I have participated in many forest management plans, 5 year timber sale plans and actual individual timber sales. Almost every public concern brought to DNR Division of Forestry attention is answered that stipulations and unresolved issues will be accomplished through the FLUP process. That is like the public's salvation.

Elimination of a FLUP appeal means that there is no public control over an ill-advised or inadequate FLUP. The Susitna Matanuska Area Plan dated August 2011 states that the FLUP contains the specific lay-out and other site-specific requirements of a timber sale. These are to be addressed through a FLUP prior to any commercial timber harvest or sale. Sensitive resources and wildlife populations or any other significant factors are considered.

The FLUP should consider physical characteristics, current land use, wetland habitat, fisheries, water quality, subsistence, recreation, scenic and cultural resources, sustained yield, allowable cut, regeneration, harvest methods, transportation, erosion, mining, materials, economy, invasive species, and public notice. The FLUP Final Finding must consider the best available data. IF THE FLUP IS INADEQUATE AND LACKS CURRENT INFORMATION WHICH WOULD AFFECT THE SALE, THEN THE PUBLIC NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO ASK FOR RECONSIDERATION.

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