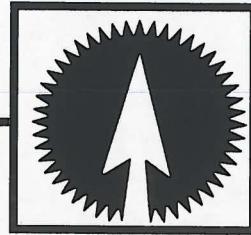


Alaska Forest Association



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March 16, 2012

Senators Joe Paskvan and Bill Wielechowski
Co-Chairs, Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

The Alaska Forest Association (AFA) is the primary timber industry association in Alaska. Our Association mission is to help sustain and restore a viable timber industry in Alaska and to insure our industry members operate their businesses in a responsible manner. We also maintain a Health Insurance program and a Pension plan for our members. AFA also sponsors the Sustainable Forestry Initiative Program for Alaska and we manage a Scholarship program.

The Alaska Forest Association supports SB 159, which establishes the Susitna State Forest.

There are several sawmills in the Anchorage area that have been struggling to maintain an adequate supply of suitable timber. Some of the mills have been idled, solely due to a lack of timber supply. The State Division of Forestry has done well managing the State Forests and the State timber sale program in Southeast Alaska. In Southeast Alaska, the Forest Service has downsized its timber sale program by about 90% and, without the State timber sales, the last remaining mills in that region would have been lost. We are confident that the State will also properly manage the Susitna State Forest lands and the new State Forest will provide ample opportunity for Alaskans to have additional wealth producing jobs.

We also believe that following the management requirements of the Alaska Forest Practices Act will insure that the water, fish and wildlife in the Susitna State Forest will be maintained and even enhanced. Further, the access that will be provided by the timber sale program will also provide additional opportunities for recreation, fire protection and additional resource development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Owen Graham
Executive Director
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