

Alaska Chapter SCI
PO Box 770511
Eagle River, AK 99577
(907) 980-9018



February 9, 2012

The Honorable Linda Menard
Alaska State Senate
120 4th St. Rm 9
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Menard:

The Alaska Chapter of SCI is in support of SB 159 and commends you for your foresight in introducing this necessary piece of legislation.

As you may or may not know, SCI Alaska Chapter is not only the leading hunter-conservationist organization in Alaska, but is also SCI's leading chapter throughout the SCI network which includes over 105 countries and 260 chapters. Our mission is to protect the freedom to hunt through political advocacy and action, support for sound, science based conservation and wildlife management, and through humanitarian services.

In reviewing SB 159 and the applicable statutory guidelines in Title 41, we may wish to suggest amendments as this bill works its way through the process. We have some concerns as to whether the simple set aside of lands into a state forest will bring about desired results.

Our first concern is that suitable habitat is maintained for wildlife upon which rests one of the primary impetuses for recreation in Alaska. This concern leads us to believe that the bill does not go far enough in sequestering the necessary habitat to sustain wildlife populations through the establishment of contiguous parcels of land.

Our other major concern involves management practices. Although some lands may not be suitable for the growth of marketable timber, we maintain that those lands are nonetheless important for this state forest designation. Most of Alaska's wildlife depends heavily upon successional plant life. 'Climax' forests do not provide the same level of benefit as does new forest lands. Since we do not encourage the proliferation of fire any longer in this area due to a variety of concerns, it is important that harvest of climax forests be allowed to produce suitable habitat for wildlife.

We look forward to working with you on this legislation and thank you again for introducing it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eddie Grasser'.

Eddie Grasser
Director of Government Affairs

SCI's Top Gun Chapter