



February 10, 2025

Honorable Alaska Senator Cathy Giessel and
Alaska State Legislature

Re: Support for Senate Bill 47

Dear Senator Giessel and members of the Alaska Legislature,

On behalf of Anchorage Park Foundation board members, and thousands of supporters, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 47. Anchorage voters have supported bonds to improve roads, trails and trailheads leading up to and within Chugach State Park. This legislation is needed to allow Alaska State Parks to grant easements to the Municipality of Anchorage to do the voter-approved work on land adjacent to and within the park.

Anchorage voters have supported annual bonds for parks and trails for the past 13 years. And in 2024, Anchorage voters supported the first Chugach Access Service Area bond of \$4 million to upgrade Canyon Road, which provides access to the popular "Sunnyside" Flattop trail and trails to Peak 3, Ptarmigan, and Rabbit Lake. Senate Bill 47 is necessary to allow the work to happen.

In addition to the annual park and trail bonds, the Anchorage Park Foundation has encouraged the Mayor and Anchorage Assembly to place a Chugach bond item before voters every year. Proposition 9 on the April 1 ballot would authorize \$300,000 to improve the Basher Trail parking lot that accesses state park land. Senate Bill 47 is critical for voter-approved Chugach Access Service Area bonds to move forward.

Parks and trails attract and retain a quality workforce and visitors, raise property values, improve health and increase recreation-related spending. We strongly support SB47 and encourage a yes vote to improve the outdoor recreation experience for residents and visitors.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Nordlund".

Beth Nordlund

Executive Director, Anchorage Park Foundation. 3201 C Street, Suite 111, Anchorage, AK 99503
[Anchorageparkfoundation.org](https://www.anchorageparkfoundation.org) - Working to improve the parks and trails you love!

Testimony in Support of SB 47

Roger Marks
Board of Supervisors, Glen Alps Road Service Area

The Glen Alps Road Service Area (GARSA) is responsible for the operation of the Glen Alps and Upper Dearmoun / Canyon Road corridors that go to the two busiest trailheads at Chugach State Park: Glen Alps and the Sunny Side (Flattop) / Rabbit Lake trailheads. Chugach State Parks gets 1.5 million visitations annually, more than Denali National Park. GARSA covers 100 percent of the seasonal maintenance cost for the roads within its jurisdiction. The funds for operating the road come solely from the property tax owners that live in the Service Area. The population density is thin and the tax base is modest.

Most of the road traffic in the Service Area is Park traffic that originates outside the Service Area. This is the major source of depreciation, especially with the increased Park traffic in recent years. This, in spite of the 1980 Chugach State Park Master Plan, where the State recognized the need to provide funding for road service area roads leading to the Park, even over 40 years ago. But these funds never materialized.

Where the road service areas work fine for de-centralized management of snow removal, and light summer maintenance, it was never meant to fund and manage Park access. Despite having the highest mill rate in the Anchorage Bowl, the low population density, coupled with the Municipality's comprehensive construction standards, make necessary capital upgrades financially prohibitive.

In 2023 Anchorage residents voted to create the Chugach State Park Service Area (CASA), consisting of the Anchorage Bowl, which became the first mechanism to finance capital upgrades for roads going to the Park. In 2024 Anchorage residents voted for a \$4 million bond for well-needed improvements to Canyon Road, which is in very poor shape.

The project involves paving and drainage for about 0.6 miles, on the municipal section of the road up to the Park boundary. Two portions of that section, about half the total length, are within Chugach State Park. However, the Municipality is prohibited from bonding for anything that is not a Municipal asset, which would apply to those two portions. (Note that GARSA taxpayers, for decades, have been paying to maintain those sections of the road within the Park, even though this is the State's responsibility.)

SB 47 would provide DNR the authority to grant easements within the Park to the Municipality. This would allow the bond funds to be used on the entire section up to the Park boundary. Thus SB 47 is crucial in order for the capital upgrades to proceed.

In the absence of SB 47, there will continue to be a poor road, which impairs the ability to get to the Park, and marginalizes the opportunities for recreational experiences. This effects both residents and visitors alike, diminishing the quality of life, and undermining economic tourism.

Thank you for your consideration.

Roger Marks
Board of Supervisors, Glen Alps Road Service Area





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