



Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

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Representative Eric Feige
State Capitol Room 126
Juneau AK, 99801

February 10th, 2011

Representative Paul Seaton
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: Bills Relating to Southeast State Forest Need to Balance Timber with Other Uses

Dear Representatives Feige and Seaton;

The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council appreciates the opportunity to comment on SB 44 and HB 105.

Issue: On January 18, 2011, Governor Parnell transmitted SB 44 and HB 105 to the legislature for consideration, which would add 23,181 acres of land to the Southeast State Forest (SESF).¹ These identical bills would nearly double the size of the 25,291 acre SESF established by the Legislature in 2010.² Last year, SB 225 proposed transferring five of the 23 parcels to be added – about 21 percent of the lands – to the University of Alaska. That bill did not pass.

Concerns: Logging is the main priority for the SESF. Fish and wildlife habitat and community use are secondary. Adding more land to the SESF creates an imbalance between timber development and other uses. Solutions are:

1. **Balance new timber lands with new State Parks;**
2. **Remove land parcels with important fish and wildlife habitat from legislation.**

Points of concern with SB 44 and HB 105 --

1. Designating this much state land for timber-first management in Southeast Alaska is imbalanced. If SB 44 is enacted, nearly 49,000 acres of state lands in Southeast Alaska will be managed primarily for timber production, when only 25,000 acres is designated for state parks, refuges, and other public use areas.
2. Less than 16 percent of all the State-owned land in Southeast Alaska is safeguarded for the long-term use and enjoyment of current and future generations of Alaskans.
3. DNR wants to add lands to the Southeast State Forest in order to make the long-term investments in actively managing 2nd growth timber stands a realistic management

¹ <http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/2011PublicBriefingHB105.pdf>

² http://forestry.alaska.gov/pdfs/Fact_Sheet_on_SESF.pdf

option. If so, then including the Hook Arm parcel on Dall Island and the Kuiu Island parcel at the mouth of Rowan Bay does not make sense.

- a. Hook Arm parcel (nearly 1,000 acres)
 - i. all old-growth timber
 - ii. the Alaska Heritage Resources Survey reports prehistoric heritage sites in or around this unit
 - iii. pink salmon anadromous stream in unit
 - iv. contains significant karst and cave resources
- b. Rowan Bay parcel (652 acres)
 - i. Over 80 percent of the parcel is old-growth timber
 - ii. There are two anadromous streams (pink, chum, & coho)
 - iii. Currently, DNR manages the parcel to maintain and retain old-growth habitat for wildlife and salmon.³
 - iv. The Plan also states: “There are numerous heritage sites within the parcel, including the site of the prehistoric Rowan Village.”

4. Given the distance of the Hook Arm and Rowan Bay parcels from the nearest community, the timber will likely be exported.
 - a. Exporting Alaska wood means exporting Alaska jobs and the fish and wildlife resources this old-growth habitat supports.
 - b. Nearly 27 percent of the timber sold from State lands in Southeast Alaska the last four years was isolated timber on Zarembo Island like that in Hook Arm and Rowan Bay and sold without a local manufacture requirement. This timber could be exported.
5. AS 41.17.210(a) requires that “[t]he proposal of the governor include a report and recommendations of the commissioner including (1) a preliminary forest inventory” The only inventory information provided by DNR to support SB 44 and HB 105 is the gross acres for each parcel. This is woefully insufficient to evaluate fully the merits of this proposal.

Options for Resolution –

1. **Balance new timber lands with new State Parks.** Designate the following 7991 acres of state land as State Parks:
 - *Sumdum (near Juneau)* – 5 acres -- this small undeveloped parcel occupies the head of Sanford Cove and lies adjacent to a popular cruise ship, charter and recreational boat travel corridor to Tracy and Endicott Arms Wilderness; it is a historic and culturally significant site.
 - *Cleveland Peninsula (near Ketchikan)* – 4,055 acres -- this parcel consists of three distinct parts, all of which occupy the northern part of Cleveland Peninsula, located northwest of Ketchikan. These lands are highly used by a guided hunting businesses and an important stop over for a youth education program that is the single largest private employer in Wrangell.
 - *Mite Cove (near Pelican)* – 320 acres – important to the nearby community of Pelican for recreation and subsistence activities; key safe anchorage for commercial boaters, particularly important for a fish packing business key integral to the troll fishery.
 - *Lynn Canal and William Henry Bay (near Haines)* – 1679 acres—these two parcels are located on the east shore of Lynn Canal. The Lynn Canal uplands and tidelands

³ http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/cs_southeast/pdf/adoptchap3.pdf at p. 3-71

are recommended for designation as a State Marine Park in the Northern Southeast Area Plan (p.3-84).⁴

- *Rowan Bay (652 acres)* (see description of values above)
- *Hook Arm (Dall Island)* – 1,280 acres – (see description of values above)

The proposed conveyance of the above lands to the University of Alaska last year in SB 225 created substantial public controversy. Public testimony shows these lands contain important cultural, historical, recreation, fish, wildlife and other important community values. We urge the Committee to safeguard these special recreational, scenic, cultural, historical, and wilderness values for the long-term benefit of Southeast Alaskans by designating them state parks.

Designating these lands as state parks will help balance the consumptive and non-consumptive uses of state lands in Southeast Alaska, which is key for maintaining both a strong economy and high quality of life in the region.

2. **Drop the Hook Arm and Rowan Bay parcels from SB 44 & HB 105 and request better inventory information from the Division of Forestry before proceeding further with the bill.**

Sincerely,



Buck Lindekugel

⁴ <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/planning/areaplans/nseap/plan/chap3.pdf>.