



201 Lincoln Street, Room 4, Sitka, Alaska 99835  
(907) 747-7509 | [info@sitkawild.org](mailto:info@sitkawild.org) | [www.sitkawild.org](http://www.sitkawild.org)

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Protecting the natural environment  
of the Tongass National Forest and  
supporting the development of  
sustainable communities within  
Southeast Alaska

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March 13, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

The Sitka Conservation Society would like to offer its support of bills SB87 and HB93 currently being heard in the Alaska Legislature.

The Sitka Conservation Society has a long history of supporting Alaska sawmills in supplying lumber to local markets. We have been purchasing lumber from Southeast Alaskan mills for the Sitka High School Career Technical Education program and over the past ten years, we have supported students in construction projects including cabinetry, garden sheds, garden chairs, and a tiny home. We have also sourced locally milled lumber for Sitka Conservation Society projects including cabin and deck projects, woodsheds, barns, sauna, and flooring. We have consistently found that the locally sourced product has superior characteristics to the lumber that is shipped to Alaska from the Pacific Northwest, Canada, and the Southeastern United States, which is where most of our available lumber supply comes from.

We support this bill because the Sitka Conservation Society believes that using locally sourced building materials for local construction and carpentry work is a critical component of community sustainability. The historic model for timber resource utilization has been to export our products to out-of-state and foreign markets. This bill is a start for the State of Alaska to invest in the capacity and ability of local businesses to meet the demand of local markets with more value-added benefits to local economies and the local workforce.

We acknowledge that there is often conflict over timber harvest in Alaska. We believe that this conflict is a result of timber harvest that is done beyond the carrying-capacity of the land, with a harvest level that surpasses the sustainable yield that the Forest can provide, which results in a degraded landscape and damaged habitat for the subsistence resources that Southeast Alaskans depend on to fill their freezers. Conflict also arises when valuable trees are exported in the round, while local residents can't purchase and use locally produced timber products. This bill is a move towards figuring out how to use our local resources sustainably, improve local economies, provide more economic niches for small businesses, and give Alaska consumers options for sourcing Alaska-made products. We are in full support of these bills.

Sincerely,

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director

**From:** House Labor and Commerce  
**To:** Jesse Logan  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Bill 87, House Bill 93  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 2:35:18 PM

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Andrew Traxler <ibmillinginalaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 10, 2023 12:36 PM  
**To:** Senate Resources <SenateResources@akleg.gov>; House Labor and Commerce  
<House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov>  
**Cc:** Laura Achee <Laura.Achee@akleg.gov>  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 87, House Bill 93

This email is to show that we support Senate Bill 87, and House Bill 93. In regard to making local lumber grading possible, for smaller scale sawmill operations. I Andrew Traxler write this, with the permission of the fellow business owners listed here. We are Sawmill and Logging business owners. Thank you for your time.

Andrew Traxler  
Papoose Milling  
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Dan Owens  
Timberline Sawmill & Cabin Company  
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Kelly and Murray Bond  
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bhaus@evergreenalaska.com  
Jim Fudge  
Elsie Creek Logging and Land Clearing LLC  
1-907-687-9012  
jimmyf@elsie creekenterprises.com  
Sent from my iPhone

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We support this bill because the Sitka Conservation Society believes that using locally sourced building materials for local construction and carpentry work is a critical component of community sustainability. The historic model for timber resource utilization has been to export our products to out-of-state and foreign markets. This bill is a start for the State of Alaska to invest in the capacity and ability of local businesses to meet the demand of local markets with more value-added benefits to local economies and the local workforce.

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Sincerely,  
Andrew Thoms Executive Director



March 16, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

The Sitka Conservation Society (SCS), Spruce Root, Inc., and The Nature Conservancy's Alaska Chapter (TNC) would like to offer our support of bills SB87 and HB93 currently being heard in the Alaska Legislature.

The Sitka Conservation Society has a long history of supporting Alaska sawmills in supplying lumber to local markets. SCS has been purchasing lumber from Southeast Alaskan mills for the Sitka High School Career Technical Education program and over the past ten years, we have supported students in construction projects including cabinetry, garden sheds, garden chairs, and a tiny home. SCS has also sourced locally milled lumber for cabin and deck projects, woodsheds, barns, sauna, and flooring. SCS has consistently found that the locally sourced product has superior characteristics to the lumber that is shipped to Alaska from the Pacific Northwest, Canada, and the Southeastern United States, which is where most of our available lumber supply comes from.

We collectively support this bill because the SCS, Spruce Root and TNC all believe that using locally sourced building materials for local construction and carpentry work is a critical component of community sustainability. The historic model for timber resource utilization has been to export our products to out-of-state and foreign markets. This bill is a start for the State of Alaska to invest in the capacity and ability of local businesses to meet the demand of local markets with more value-added benefits to local economies and the local workforce.

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Sincerely,

Andrew Thoms  
Executive Director  
Sitka Conservation Society

Alana Peterson  
Executive Director  
Spruce Root, Inc.

Julia Nave  
Interim SE Alaska Program Co-Director  
The Nature Conservancy, Alaska



## KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

1900 First Avenue, Suite 115, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

• Telephone: (907) 228-6605 • Fax (907) 228-6697

Office of the Borough Mayor

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March 16, 2023

### HB 93 Lumber Grading Program

I am writing this letter in support of HB 93; The Lumber Grading Program. Areas within the Ketchikan Gateway borough and Southeast Alaska have a long history of logging and small sawmills. Many of our oldest homes were produced with locally made lumber; that many are still standing today is a testament to the quality.

During the pandemic we witnessed how fragile the supply chain is and saw dramatic increases in the cost to import lumber. Locally we have paid as much as \$12 for a 2x4 and \$150 for sheets of plywood. In early 2021, we conducted a community wide risk assessment on how the pandemic was affecting our economy. That assessment revealed that increased lumber costs added roughly \$30,000 extra to the construction of a new home. This was in addition to sharply rising shipping costs for our remote communities.

HB 93 is important to us, because like many other regions, we are facing a housing crisis. Access to affordable housing is a major problem, only getting worse as time moves on.

We see this bill as a way to facilitate local access to locally produced lumber; supporting affordable housing and hopefully creating new jobs in the process. This is not going to solve our housing problems by itself, but it is supportive and I would encourage your consideration of this important legislation.

*Sincerely,*

**Rodney Dial**

Mayor,

Ketchikan Gateway Borough [rodneyd@kgbak.us](mailto:rodneyd@kgbak.us) / 907-220-6861



The Alaska State Homebuilders Association (ASHBA) is the voice of Alaska's home building industry representing Alaska's six regional home building associations and over 400 member companies, statewide.

ASHBA strives to grow housing opportunities for Alaskans while working to achieve professional success for its building contractors and trade workers who build communities, create jobs and strengthen Alaska's economy.

ASHBA works to maintain high standards in the home building industry, reduce risks, and encourage sound business methods.

ASHBA is a service-oriented association run by and for its membership.

### 2023 Positions

- ASHBA supports legislation to adopt a minimum standard state residential building code to help ensure safe and resilient structures across Alaska.
- ASHBA supports continued state funding for the Cold Climate Housing Research Center to make housing more efficient, healthy, and affordable for Alaskans.
- ASHBA supports continued state funding for the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Weatherization Program to increase the energy efficiency of existing and newly constructed homes.
- ASHBA supports the state investing in high quality technical and vocational training opportunities to support Alaska's high-demand careers and grow our own in the home building industry.
- ASHBA supports the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation in assuming the dredge and fill permitting program under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to protect Alaska ecosystems and benefit Alaska communities.
- ASHBA supports the creation of a local use lumber program to allow expansion of the current lumber market in Alaska.
- ASHBA supports a prohibition on real estate transfer taxes in the state.

**From:** [Laura Achee](#)  
**To:** [Jesse Logan](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Bill 87, House Bill 93  
**Date:** Friday, March 10, 2023 1:29:26 PM

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FYI

-----Original Message-----

From: Andrew Traxler <[ibmillinginalaska@gmail.com](mailto:ibmillinginalaska@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Friday, March 10, 2023 12:36 PM  
To: Senate Resources <[SenateResources@akleg.gov](mailto:SenateResources@akleg.gov)>; House Labor and Commerce  
<[House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov)>  
Cc: Laura Achee <[Laura.Achee@akleg.gov](mailto:Laura.Achee@akleg.gov)>  
Subject: Senate Bill 87, House Bill 93

This email is to show that we support Senate Bill 87, and House Bill 93. In regards to making local lumber grading possible, for smaller scale sawmill operations. I Andrew Traxler write this, with the permission of the fellow business owners listed here. We are Sawmill and Logging business owners. Thank you for your time.

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Dan Owens  
Timberline Sawmill & Cabin Company  
(907) 841-4336

Kelly and Murray Bond  
Bond brothers Logging  
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(907) 841-3373

Carl Frantzich  
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Brett Haus  
President  
Evergreen Alaska Inc  
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[bhaus@evergreenalaska.com](mailto:bhaus@evergreenalaska.com)

Jim Fudge  
Elsie Creek Logging and Land Clearing LLC  
1-907-687-9012  
[jimmyf@elsiecreekenterprises.com](mailto:jimmyf@elsiecreekenterprises.com)

Sent from my iPhone

HB93 Letters/Emails of Support

**From:** Josh Leatherman

**To:** Jesse Logan

**Subject:** Lumber grading

**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 11:36:18 AM

Hi Jesse,

> I own and operate a small contracting company that specializes in log and timber framing. I also operate a sawmill and have to ship Douglas fir in from Washington state every season.

>

> The reason for this is the fact that most municipalities in Alaska have adopted the international building code which states that all lumber used in a structural application must bear a grade stamp by an accredited lumber grading agency.

>

> Passing these bills would enable many small businesses like mine to utilize our bountiful and high quality Alaskan timber. We have the two largest national forest in the nation and we should be able to obtain and utilize our resources.

>

> Most Alaskan's that I deal with would rather use and support local grown products. Being able to use the local timber in structural applications is a great start to put us on the right path a more sensible and sustainable future.

>>>>

> Regards,

> Josh Leatherman

> Precision Timberworks

>

[https://urldefense.com/v3/\\_http://www.timberframingalaska.com\\_!!LdQKC6s!PrG8slYqi69xRjeWz1uFeEN2tLOOw-](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.timberframingalaska.com_!!LdQKC6s!PrG8slYqi69xRjeWz1uFeEN2tLOOw-Mq-9QOLRkTt7CCODMfc4NoCOSdlqi9gDgay4uTmW2Vb4CwdSg7vlc--UM8657YXwA$)

[Mq-9QOLRkTt7CCODMfc4NoCOSdlqi9gDgay4uTmW2Vb4CwdSg7vlc--UM8657YXwA\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_http://www.timberframingalaska.com_!!LdQKC6s!PrG8slYqi69xRjeWz1uFeEN2tLOOw-Mq-9QOLRkTt7CCODMfc4NoCOSdlqi9gDgay4uTmW2Vb4CwdSg7vlc--UM8657YXwA$)

> 907-362-7688

>

Sent from my iPhone



**From:** [Gordon Chew](#)  
**To:** [Senate Resources](#)  
**Cc:** [Laura Achee](#); [Jesse Logan](#)  
**Subject:** Letter in Support of SB 87  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 10:54:04 AM

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Dear Senate Resource Committee

It is with great encouragement that I offer our support for the proposed lumber grading bill.

As builders, restoration contractors and lumber millers this is a great opportunity to begin using the high quality products we offer in a wider application: this will support further employment opportunities and promote local production and sales of timber to owner/builders and contractors across the state.

There is no downside to this bill as we need to use all of our Alaskan resources to build and to rebuild the infrastructure in our towns, city's and state.

Buying from Alaskans and keeping our industry alive and thriving are just a couple of the lasting benefits to this action.

Many thanks,

~Gordon

Gordon Chew  
Tenakee Logging Company



Cold Climate Housing Research Center

**CCHRC**

March 13, 2023

Representative Jesse Sumner, Chair  
House Labor and Commerce Committee

**RE: House Bill 93 – Local Lumber grading training program, certificates and use of locally graded lumber**

Dear Representative Sumner,

For the last few years, the Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC), in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL) have been working with Alaska Division of Forestry and the United States Forestry Service on wood innovation projects funded by USFS. Our research has focused on strategies that could overcome the barriers to utilizing locally harvested lumber to address rural Alaska's acute housing shortage. Currently, we are partnering with the Kuskokwim Corporation on a USFS Wood Innovation Grant project that incorporates local timber wall construction and a distinct method of milling to create a 'harvest to home' model for the Middle Kuskokwim region.

The organizations' work on this subject goes farther back than just this suite of current projects, including economic development studies of potential truss fabrication plants in rural hubs. As you may know, the smaller and more remote an Alaskan community, the less likely it is to be able to utilize its local forest resource to create lumber for housing projects. While there are some barriers in capacity and training for local mill operators, the largest barrier by far is an administrative one.

*Remote communities do not have equitable access to national lumber grading mechanisms, and as a result are required to import structural lumber at some of the highest costs per unit in the nation despite being located in one of the largest forested areas left in North America.*

This administrative barrier disproportionately affects uses for energy-efficient construction types that would qualify for many HUD-funded programs, Alaska Housing Finance requirements, and conventional lending. As a result, most local-harvest housing projects in rural Alaska tend to be traditional butt-and-pass log cabins, which do not require a lumber grade. These traditional structures are durable and resilient, but not energy efficient and not easily financeable, exacerbating the deficiencies in the current housing stock.

This legislation has the potential to greatly improve the ability of small communities, Tribes, and corporations to address the continuing housing shortage in their regions, and we urge it's support.

Thank you,

Mindy L. O'Neill  
Executive Director  
Cold Climate Housing Research Center

**From:** [House Labor and Commerce](#)  
**To:** [Jesse Logan](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Senate Bill 87, House Bill 93  
**Date:** Monday, March 13, 2023 2:35:18 PM

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Cc: Laura Achee <[Laura.Achee@akleg.gov](mailto:Laura.Achee@akleg.gov)>  
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