

HB 218 Written Testimony

Received 5-4-26

Stuart Relay

From: Tom Paragi [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2026 10:28 AM
To: House State Affairs
Subject: support for HB 218

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Dear committee members:

I urge you to pass HB 218 through the House State Affairs committee. I am a retired wildlife biologist who moved to Fairbanks in 1985 to attend the University of Alaska Fairbanks and worked my entire career in Alaska.

This bill would add adjacent or nearby undesignated state lands with forest cover to the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF). These lands are currently in two State of Alaska area plans and designated primarily for forestry or for forestry primarily with a secondary designation for wildlife habitat. Addition to the state forest would enable continued management of renewable resources and public access that could be compromised if the lands were disposed for other uses.

The TVSF provides timber for local mills to saw into lumber and to commercial firewood suppliers to help residents meet energy needs. The forest is also managed for personal firewood harvest to benefit local residents. The state forest further provides public access for hunting, fishing, picking berries, and recreational uses such as mushing, skiing, and riding snow machines.

The management plan for the TVSF was updated a couple years ago to reflect current societal desires and the latest science on resource management. The plan describes conditions under which exploration for and development of coal, minerals, or energy resources is allowed in the TVSF within existing laws and regulations and where they would not be incompatible with the primary purpose of the state forest in AS 41.17.200.

A Citizen Advisory Committee for the TVSF represents a range of scientific disciplines, local communities, and public uses to evaluate proposals and provide recommendations to the Director of the Division of Forestry. This committee has been functioning well for about 30 years to integrate timber harvest with the many other uses of the TVSF.

My career included applied research on conservation or enhancement of wildlife habitat on "working lands" where fire and forest management also occur, The TVSF is a good example where multiple uses have been effectively integrated using sustainable practices, including adherence to the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act.

Again, I ask you to please support passage of HB 218 for addition of undesignated state lands to the Tanana Valley State Forest. Thank you for your consideration.

Tom Paragi



Fairbanks, AK 99709

Stuart Relay

From: Douglas Hanson <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Saturday, February 21, 2026 12:01 PM
To: House State Affairs
Subject: HB 218

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Representative Ashley Carrick,

I am providing comments on the expansion of the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) bill number HB218. I am in support of the expansion as it will help ensure a stable forest land base for individual recreation users and commercial timber harvesters alike.

As a 15-year former forester for the Division of Forestry and Fire Management here in Fairbanks, I worked exclusively in timber management and providing forest inventory information for sustainable use of the forest. Timber harvest activities occur on both TVSF lands and other DNR lands classified for forest use. It is these other forest classified lands that are being proposed for inclusion into the state forest. When developing annual allowable harvest amounts which incorporate growth rates over relatively long periods of time it is important to have a clear understanding of which lands stay in forest cover. By incorporating the forest classified lands into the TVSF valid sustainable rates of harvest can be made many years into the future. Access development and investments in silviculture treatments are more likely to be made which enhances forest growth and makes the TVSF an economic contributor to the state.

Sincerely,

Douglas Hanson
[REDACTED]
Fairbanks, AK 99712

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