

# Southeast Conference

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February 16, 2009

The Honorable Governor Sarah Palin  
PO Box 110001  
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Governor Palin;

The Southeast Conference (SEC) is a broad based association of communities in Southeast Alaska with a mission of undertaking and supporting activities that promote strong economies, healthy communities and a quality environment throughout the region. In furthering that mission, SEC would like to lend its support for the concept of creating a new State Forest in southern southeast.

In southern southeast the demand for state supplied timber far exceeds the supply. The majority of the timber in the area is on federal land; however federal timber sales have declined dramatically. For their survival, the few remaining, local mills now depend heavily on state supplied timber from the 49,000 state acres where timber management is allowed.

Many of the states' managed acres support either second-growth stands on lands previously harvested by the U.S. Forest Service prior to state selection or new-growth on lands that have recently been harvested through state sales. Thus, for a future timber supply from state lands in southeast, the emphasis must be on active management of second-growth stands with higher volumes per acre, less impact on wildlife, and shorter harvest rotations.

In order for the state to expend funds to enter into intensive second-growth management on its timber lands, there must be assurance that the acres will be managed for timber over the long term. That assurance can best come through the designation of the lands as a State Forest with a management plan calling for extended, intensive timber management. With that designation, the Division of Forestry would be able to manage the lands for a reliable, long-term supply of timber to local processors and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses.

Approximately 3,800 acres of state lands potentially included in a new State Forest are within the new Wrangell Borough. SEC understands that the establishment of State Forest lands within the new borough would not adversely affect the amount of land Wrangell may select. AS 29.65.030 states that borough selections are based on the maximum total acres



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of vacant, un-appropriated, unreserved land within the borough boundaries within two years following the date of incorporation. SEC would hope that any legislation designating a new Southern Southeast State Forest would provide for this situation.

In conclusion, SEC would like to lend its support for the establishment of a Southern Southeast State Forest and would like to encourage your administration to advocate its establishment. Further, in order to increase the supply of timber available to the dependent industry in the region, we urge you to take advantage of any opportunities to increase the acreage of timberland managed by the Division of Forestry.

Sincerely,



Shelly Wright  
Executive Director

cc Chris Maisch



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