



FIRST THINGS FIRST
ALASKA FOUNDATION

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*First Things First
Alaska Foundation
is a 501(c)(3)
nonprofit
organization
dedicated to
preserving the
economic
viability and
future of Alaska
through
education*

The Honorable Bert Stedman
State Capitol Building
Room 30
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Senate Concurrent Resolution 2, Acquire Tongass National Forest Land

Dear Senator Stedman,

The First Things First Alaska Foundation (FTFAF) wishes to express our support for SCR 2 and our appreciation for your raising this important issue to Alaskans. The First Things First Alaska Foundation is dedicated to preserving the economic viability and future of Alaska through education. There is a clear need to educate the public on the benefits of responsible economic development and natural resource management.

SCR 2 Seeks to acquire additional forested land in the Tongass National Forest for the State of Alaska with the intent of using it to provide available timber to support economic sustainability in Southeast Alaska. This would provide an opportunity for the struggling timber industry to secure access to timber and provide jobs for Alaskans.

The US Forest Service has unilaterally decided to close off 92 percent of the Tongass National Forest by implementing new roadless rule regulation, which will be applied to future development, including timber harvests, mining, and hydroelectric and other renewable energy projects.

The Forest Service admits in the 2001 Roadless Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) that the total direct and indirect job and income losses from timber harvest restrictions would be 864 to 895 jobs and \$37.3 to \$38.7 million. The Forest Service acknowledged that the immediate prohibition on road construction would eliminate 95% of the timber harvest from the affected areas. The Forest Service concluded that "the long-term ecological benefits to the nation of conserving this inventoried roadless areas outweigh the potential economic loss to those local communities..."

Continued management of the Tongass National Forest as a pristine sanctuary for those who will never depend on the reasonable use of this resource should come to an end. Federal ownership and management of Alaska lands has led to one extreme of locking it up or the other extreme of over utilization. We believe

that Alaska has a strong record of responsible resource development, providing economic benefit and maintaining the the sustained usability of the resource.

We believe SCR 2 should be adopted by the Alaska State Legislature.

Sincerely,

Neil MacKinnon
President