

**Statement of
Rebecca Knight
PO Box 1331
Petersburg, AK 99833
March 4, 2015**

On HB 87 (and it's companion bill SB 32) - Timber Sales on State Forests

Good Afternoon Committee Members,

We just received the CS here in Petersburg but have had little opportunity to review it, so submit my full prepared testimony.

HB 87 (and it's companion bill SB 32) should be rejected in its/their entirety for a variety of reasons:

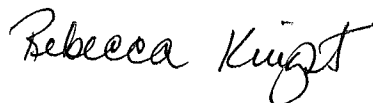
- HB 87 would suspend sustained yield requirements for large timber sales on State Forests. At a minimum, this is an exceptionally poor business practice that private sector companies like Weyerhaeuser and Georgia Pacific and their professional foresters would never give a second thought. It is also a poster child for squandering public resources to the detriment of future generations.
- HB 87 will allow long-term 25 year contracts for timber to be negotiated, and without advertisement or competitive bid - another questionable business practice. Given proposed huge State government budget cuts, recently approved by House Finance, it would not be prudent to support such contracts when there is no assurance that the funds to administer the contracts would be available down the road and could leave the State at risk of contract cancellation and associated compensation costs.
- HB 87 gives primacy of our State public lands to logging, above all other resources - above fish and wildlife, subsistence needs, recreation and scenic quality. My commercial fishing family depends on quality fish habitat however this habitat will not even receive the minimal protections as on federal lands. 100 ft. no cut buffers are the norm on most federal fish streams, yet streams on State land will only receive 66 ft. buffers, and these buffers are routinely granted exemptions, particularly when there is large timber in the stream side area. This is exactly the habitat that provides shade and stream stability to our valuable fish streams. I am unconvinced that essential fish habitat is adequately protected under these circumstances.
- The State of Alaska is already selling large quantities of timber Statewide. In southeast 245 MMBF are slated to be cut on the State's five year operating plan. Additionally 4.5

MMBF are proposed to be logged on Mitkof Island where I live and a number of other sales are proposed or underway on Prince of Wales, Kosciusko and other SE Islands. Most, if not all, of these landscapes have already lost vast quantities of valuable habitat due to timber extraction. Non-timber uses have been dramatically impacted.

- The bills also repeals the Alaska Statute that presently restricts negotiated sales to places where there is high local unemployment, under-utilized milling capacity, and an underutilized allowable cut for state timber. Timber would be sold at appraised value instead of to the highest bidder (however in many places it may be difficult to get an appraisal that gives the state fair value for the timber).
- The bills would require a finding that a sale is in the best interest of the state; however, since these findings are made by DNR - the timber extraction arm of State government and because the Alaska Forest Practices Act is weak (and I might add in serious need of overhaul), these findings are **heavily biased** toward logging. The types of forest resources that are most important to most people - fish, wildlife, the opportunity for subsistence most often get only cursory consideration from DNR.
- I believe State timber in SE Alaska will be exported in the round providing few jobs - to the very industry that this bill is supposedly intended to prop up. It is yet another subsidy with no real payback. Although State Forester Maisch claimed when questioned by Rep. Josephson that this is an incorrect assumption, please remember that saying so does not make it so, and I believe his a claim intended to insure passage of the bill rather than a depiction of reality.
- Finally, your committee should consult with expert ADFG fish and wildlife biologists regarding the potential impacts of HB 87, free of the restrictions of the DNR's "One Voice" timber promotion policy.

HB-87 & SB-32 are not in the best interest of the State of Alaska or its people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rebecca Knight". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Rebecca Knight