

**From:** [Brenda Jones](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Haines State Forest  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 31, 2015 2:28:50 PM  
**Attachments:** [Haines State Forest Documents.pdf](#)

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Dear Finance Committee,

I am writing to ask for your support in keeping the Haines DNR Forestry Office open for the Haines State Forest.

Haines is a small community of approximately 2,500 residents. We have limited economic opportunities and are currently suffering with an unemployment rate of 15.3 % (per AK DOL March 13, 2015 press release attached). The current student enrollment in the public Haines Borough School District is at the lowest level since 1957 (see attached enrollment chart). We rely on the Alaska Marine Highway for ferry service and we are aware of the deep cuts that will be coming to ferry service. Our rural and remote location provides unique challenges. In addition to our limited economic opportunities, we also have few opportunities for entertainment and recreation. We do not have movie theaters, bowling alleys, sports centers, or other amenities available in more populated areas.

However, the people of Haines pursue the best quality of life possible and use our local resources to their fullest extent. One of the few resources that we have available is the Haines State Forest. We rely on the Haines State Forest for cord wood and lumber from small timber operators. We also rely on the Haines State Forest for firewood from down and dead trees. Road access to the forest is also important for our subsistence needs for berry picking, mushroom foraging, hunting and fishing just to name a few.

The Alaska Legislature created the Haines State Forest in 1982 as a multiple use area in support of timbers sales, subsistence activities and recreation. The forest contains 286,000

acres with approximately 42,000 acres dedicated to timber harvest. These multiple uses were established in **AS 41.15.300** ***“The primary purposes for the establishment of the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area are the utilization, perpetuation, conservation, and production of the land and water including but not limited to the use of renewable and nonrenewable resources through multiple-use management and continuation of other beneficial uses including traditional uses and other recreational activities.”***

In Alaska we are blessed to have Article 8 of the Constitution to establish Alaskan’s right of use of the natural resources. **Article 8 (2) states: “The legislature shall provide for the utilization, development, and conservation of all natural resources belonging to the State, including land and waters, for the maximum benefit of its people.”**

I understand that difficult budget choices must be made. Excess revenue has allowed funding for a tremendous growth in State government that brought added “niceties”. Please note that the Haines office has been staffed since the 1960’s. This office was not created due to an expansive growth in State government. It was established over 50 years ago due to a recognized need for active management of our community’s resources. Acknowledgement of the need for active forest management was codified in Alaska Statutes more than twenty years later in support of multiple uses.

As a point of context I am also attaching the 1982 letter to Governor Hammond requesting the establishment of the Haines State Forest and acknowledging the codified need for active management in the Haines State Forest Resource Management Area. Please note the letter expressing the need of the historic legislation that created the Haines State Forest was supported and signed by representatives from: The City of Haines, Haines Borough, Schnabel Lumber Company, Lynn Canal Conservation, National Audubon Society, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and Alaska Miners Association.

Please understand and support our need to keep local personnel with forestry expertise available to the community in the Haines DNR Forestry office. This local office is needed to

actively manage the Haines State Forest which supports the multiple uses that serve the needs of our community.

Sincerely,

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