



LAND EXCHANGE LEGISLATION

What is the land exchange?

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) and the United States Forest Service (USFS) have proposed exchanging approximately 20,000 acres of USFS land for 18,000 acres of Trust land. The proposal is the result of extensive negotiations between the Trust and the USFS and nearly decade of work with interested parties in Southeast Alaska.

The exchange will help the Trust Land Office fulfill its mission by replacing trust-owned property adjacent to several communities with land that has higher value for timber harvest. This will help the Trust Land Office increase revenue production from Trust-owned land, which supports vital mental health services for Alaskan beneficiaries.

Where is the land?

- Approximately 18,000 acres of Trust lands adjacent to the communities of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, Juneau and Myers Chuck and a parcel at No Name Bay would be transferred to the USFS.
- Approximately 20,000 acres of remote land on Prince of Wales Island and Shelter Cove would be transferred to the Trust for development and timber harvest.

What does the exchange accomplish?

Transferring these lands to the USFS will protect popular trails, viewsheds, and iconic recreational sites along the Inside Passage. It will also help to protect certain watersheds near communities and preserves some old growth timber stands. The exchange will also ensure jobs stay in the Southeast communities by protecting the timber and tourism industries.

As the USFS transitions to sustainable young growth timber management, there is a lack of timber supply to keep the timber industry alive in Southeast Alaska. The key to the transition is to have sufficient timber supplies to bridge to the time when sufficient young growth timber is available for market. This exchange is a critical component of supplying that transition timber.

What needs to happen?

The land exchange requires legislation in both the U.S. Congress and the Alaska State Legislature. House Bill 155 and Senate Bill 88 have been introduced in the Alaska Legislature by Representative Ortiz of Ketchikan and Senator Stedman. U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan and Rep. Don Young have introduced companion bills (S. 131 and HR.513) to direct the USFS to complete the exchange. The congressional bills have not yet had hearings.

How can you help?

To support the land exchange and the larger mission of the Trust, you can email the Alaska Legislature and the Alaska Congressional Delegation to thank them and express your support of the legislation.

Rep. Ortiz: Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov

Senator Murkowski: www.murkowski.senate.gov/contact/email

Senator Sullivan: www.sullivan.senate.gov/contact/email

Representative Young: www.donyoung.house.gov/contact

Senator Stedman: sen.bert.stedman@akleg.gov

"This is a widely supported, common sense solution that will deliver real economic and environmental benefits for Southeast communities. It is one of my top legislative priorities, and my goal is to have it signed into law as quickly as possible."

— Senator Lisa Murkowski

"I am excited about the potential of this bill to increase revenue for mental health programs and the timber industry while protecting iconic lands, such as Ketchikan's Deer Mountain."

— Rep. Dan Ortiz

What is the Mental Health Trust?

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority funds programs that serve Alaska's most vulnerable populations and includes programs for people with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse disorders. In order to support vital mental health services for Alaskans, the Trust needs to continue to generate revenue from its land and resources.

The Trust grants approximately \$20 million annually to projects, activities, state agencies and nonprofits that improve the lives of their beneficiaries in the areas of:

- Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- Housing and Long-term Services & Supports
- Disability Justice
- Employment & Engagement

What is the Trust Land Office?

The Trust Land Office (TLO) manages Mental Health Trust land to generate revenue, which is used by The Trust to improve the lives of Trust beneficiaries. Non-cash assets include:

- Timber management of 130,000 acres of commercial forestland.
- Prospective tracts for mineral leasing, exploration, and development.
- Land management and stewardship, competitive and negotiated land sales, leases, licenses, and easements.
- Real estate opportunities uniquely situated for residential and commercial activities.
- Coal, oil and gas rights on 300,000 acres of land.