

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Mike Dunleavy
Senator

Sponsor Statement **SB 65 Jonesville Public Use Area**

The community of Sutton is home to the incredible “coal hills” which provides Alaskans with a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. Due to the lack of defined activities zones, the area has become dangerous for both users and residents. Unfortunately, the Sutton/Jonesville area is commonly referred to as the Wild West.

The recreational area has become a serious public safety issue due to a multitude of issues from litter, to drugs, to abandoned burned and shot-up vehicles, to the unsafe discharge of firearms across hiking trails and homes, and the fatal shooting of a photographer. Recognizing that it is difficult for the Mat-Su Borough’s 36 officers to adequately patrol the equivalent of West Virginia, a public use area is needed to help improve public safety at this beautiful recreational site.

SB 65 would establish the Jonesville Public Use Area to protect, maintain, enhance, and perpetuate the current use of the area for:

- year-round general public recreation,
- protecting and maintaining habitats for fish and wildlife,
- use of off-road vehicles,
- access for miners and owners of private property, and
- other activities as designated by the commissioner of DNR.

The Jonesville Public Use Area would increase public safety while preserving the recreational site for use by all Alaskans.

I respectfully request your support for SB 65.

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