



GREAT LAND TRUST

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Conserving lands and waterways essential to the quality of life and economic health of Southcentral Alaska

April 3, 2017

The Honorable Senator MacKinnon
State Capitol, Room 516
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator MacKinnon:

I am writing this letter to express our support for the line item in the Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) capital budget for receipt authority to purchase land using Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Trustee Council (EVOSTC) funds. As we've discussed with your staff, approval of a DNR capital budget that includes this receipt authority line item is a win-win for Alaskans, since it would result in the permanent conservation of approximately 5,000 acres of land while also generating close to \$20 million in revenue for multiple Native Corporations and, in the case of the property owned by Uyak Natives, Inc., generating income for a timber company that currently owns timber interests on the land. The landowners and the timber company are eager to complete these sales and intend to submit letters of support to your office as well.

Since 2013, Great Land Trust (GLT) has been working on behalf of the EVOSTC to identify high-priority lands most appropriate for conservation, and to offer landowners fair market value payment for the sale of these properties. GLT is an independent nonprofit land conservation organization founded by and for Alaskans in 1995, with a service area that includes more than 50 percent of Alaska's total population and ranges from the Alaska Range in the North to Prince William Sound and Kodiak to the south. Great Land Trust works in partnership with willing private and public landowners to permanently conserve special lands, signature landscapes, and waters essential to the quality of life and economic health of communities in the region. We seek to protect the integrity of natural ecosystems, wetlands and streams, access to recreational lands, and conserve lands important for towns and cities. The lands that would be purchased with the EVOSTC funds identified in the receipt authority line item are high-priority lands, and conservation of these lands would protect habitat for a variety of species, including salmon.

If the DNR capital budget is approved with the receipt authority line item, we will be able to use EVOSTC funds to better the position of several Native Corporations as well as industry, and also be able to permanently conserve land that will, as a result of the sale, be accessible to the public. Using the EVOSTS funds, we are able to create this win-win result without the use of any State resources.

We respectfully request that the Senate Finance Committee retain this receipt authority line item in DNR's capital budget. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have about these projects, or the line item. Please feel free to reach me by email at ellen@greatlandtrust.org or phone at 907.278.4992.

Sincerely,

Ellen Kazary
Executive Director, Great Land Trust
715 L Street, Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99501

Great Land Trust | P.O. Box 101272 | Anchorage, AK 99510 | (907) 278-4998 | www.greatlandtrust.org

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