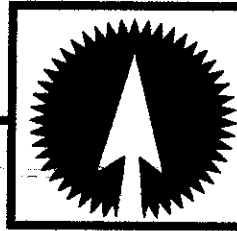


Alaska Forest Association



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April 22, 2021

The Honorable Josiah Patkotak, Chair
House Resources Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Sent Via Email: Grace.Ervine@akleg.gov

RE: HB 98, Forest land use plans, appeals, and negotiated timber sales

Dear Chairman Patkotak,

The Alaska Forest Association (AFA) is an industry trade organization dedicated to promoting the interests and needs of Alaska's timber industry. The AK timber industry is reliant on a predictable timber supply from a variety of landowners, including the State of AK (State). Limitations on sales by federal landowners such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the transition from old growth (OG) to young growth (YG) timber under the 2016 Tongass Land Management Plan (Plan), and prevailing market conditions necessitate State legislation that streamlines agency processes, and ensures efficient forestry planning.

AFA recognizes that HB 98 provides the general benefit of doing away with the ability to appeal a Forest Land Use Plan (FLUP), which in turn allows the State to conduct timber sales more efficiently, without compromising environmental review and public comment requirements and processes.

However, in review of the specific sections of the Bill, and in light of recent amendments that are under consideration to the Bill regarding limitations on exports and local hire requirements, AFA is concerned that the Bill will have negative unintended consequences on the timber industry and our member operators.

AFA looks forward to answering any questions you may have regarding our comments on the Bill. Please contact me at either tessa@akforest.org, or 907-225-6114.

Sincerely,



Tessa Axelson
Executive Director