

BRIEFING PAPER: SB 85/HB 98

Forest Land Use Plans & Appeals; Negotiated Timber Sales

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DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Issue 1: Negotiated Timber Sales

- Alaska timber market's pivot to exports increases need for more flexible, long-term negotiated sales.
 - Current law allows negotiated sales only if timber is for in-state, local manufacturing.
 - Current law allows purchasers just one negotiated sale/year.

Action needed: Eliminate local manufacture limit; allow purchasers more than one negotiated sale/year.

Issue 2: Forest Land Use Plans

- Four steps required before a timber sale; each allows public comment and agency review:
 - Area & state forest plans provide the land-use designations allowing harvest
 - Five-Year Schedule of Timber Sales provides overview of future harvests
 - Best Interest Finding (BIF) documents decision to sell timber; covers all harvest units
 - Forest Land Use Plans (FLUPs) detail site-specific, on-the-ground implementation of BIF
- BIF: “Should we sell this timber?” FLUPs: “How should we sell this timber?”
- For short-term sales, DOF may prepare BIFs and FLUPs simultaneously.
- For long-term sales, DOF prepares FLUPs for most accessible units first, then for other units as harvest proceeds, allowing safe, efficient, timely, economical access.
- Both BIFs and FLUPs can now be appealed, opening door to repeated harvest interruptions that deprive purchasers of a stable, predictable timber supply and make Alaska timber less attractive.

Action needed: Refocus appeal process at BIF stage; prevent redundant FLUP appeals.

Why is HB 98 important?

HB 98 streamlines timber sale process

- Makes forestry planning more efficient
- Retains public & agency participation, including public right to appeal BIF

HB 98 supports timber industry and jobs with additional incentives and more predictability

- Provides consistent, dependable timber supplies
- Allows predictable timber harvests
- Forestalls appeal interruptions once BIF is final

HB 98 increases timber sale flexibility to meet evolving market demands

- Supports export markets (round-log sales may be negotiated)
- Protects local markets (sales can still be negotiated for local manufacturers)

HB 98 eliminates multiple, redundant appeals for the same timber sale

- Prevents “two bites at the apple”

HB 98 modernizes statutes

- Consolidates and simplifies confusing negotiated sales law

HB 98 saves money

- Reduces DOF operational costs
- Zero fiscal note

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