



KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

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Office of the Borough Mayor

March 16, 2023

HB 93 Lumber Grading Program

I am writing this letter in support of HB 93; The Lumber Grading Program. Areas within the Ketchikan Gateway borough and Southeast Alaska have a long history of logging and small sawmills. Many of our oldest homes were produced with locally made lumber; that many are still standing today is a testament to the quality.

During the pandemic we witnessed how fragile the supply chain is and saw dramatic increases in the cost to import lumber. Locally we have paid as much as \$12 for a 2x4 and \$150 for sheets of plywood. In early 2021, we conducted a community wide risk assessment on how the pandemic was affecting our economy. That assessment revealed that increased lumber costs added roughly \$30,000 extra to the construction of a new home. This was in addition to sharply rising shipping costs for our remote communities.

HB 93 is important to us, because like many other regions, we are facing a housing crisis. Access to affordable housing is a major problem, only getting worse as time moves on.

We see this bill as a way to facilitate local access to locally produced lumber; supporting affordable housing and hopefully creating new jobs in the process. This is not going to solve our housing problems by itself, but it is supportive and I would encourage your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Rodney Dial

Mayor,

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