

Joe Hayes

From: Hig <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, March 20, 2025 3:38 PM
To: Senate State Affairs
Subject: Comments in support of SB120 - climate-linked landslide hazards

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Hello,

I am calling into the hearing today, with the testimony below. I would be happy to talk further about my work on landslides that pose a serious threat in Alaska, including for the Dalton Highway + TAPS in the Brooks Range, for Portage Lake, and for the cruise industry. My contact info is below.

-Hig

Hello, my name is Bretwood Higman and I live in Seldovia. I am a geologist and I study natural disasters like tsunamis, earthquakes, and landslides.

I'm supportive of SB120 because it seeks to address what I see as a lack of planning for future disasters.

Throughout history, we see that the most devastating disasters are the ones that catch people unprepared, like the 1964 earthquake. We also see that Climate change is altering what disasters happen where, making events we haven't prepared for more likely.

Recently my research has focused on large landslides that are growing more likely in areas of permafrost or glacial retreat. I've focused my attention here because it looks like we are both unprepared for these disasters, and they could be particularly devastating.

I'd like to highlight a few particular concerns that I don't think are widely recognized: There is a slope above Portage Lake that shows all the hallmarks of impending failure, and a tsunami could not only put many people at risk, it could sever vital rail, road, power, and internet infrastructure. I also worry about the Dalton Highway through the Brooks Range. Mountain slopes with a lot of permafrost have been failing at an increasing rate here - one of these failures might sever the highway or the Trans Alaska Pipeline. And I worry about the possibility that a cruise ship or tour boat would be caught by a tsunami from a landslide in one of Alaska's fjords - a potential immense human tragedy and one that could be crippling to Alaska's tourist economy.

Thank you for your attention - please feel free to reach out if you would like more information about my work.

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Hig (Bretwood Higman, PhD)

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