

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 22, 2017

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Cathy Giessel, Chair
Senator John Coghill, Vice Chair
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Shelley Hughes
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Board of Game

Tom Lamal - Fairbanks, Alaska
Karen Linnell - Glennallen, Alaska

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

SENATE BILL NO. 58

"An Act relating to the Department of Law public advocacy function to participate in matters that come before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission."

- MOVED SB 58 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 88

"An Act authorizing a land exchange with the federal government in which certain Alaska mental health trust land is exchanged for certain national forest land and relating to the costs of the exchange; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 58

SHORT TITLE: DEPT OF LAW: ADVOCACY BEFORE FERC
SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/13/17 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/13/17 (S) RES, JUD, FIN
03/20/17 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/20/17 (S) Heard & Held
03/20/17 (S) MINUTE(RES)
03/22/17 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 88

SHORT TITLE: AK MENTAL HEALTH TRUST LAND EXCHANGE
SPONSOR(s): STEDMAN

03/10/17 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/10/17 (S) RES, FIN
03/22/17 (S) RES AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

TOM LAMAL, Appointee
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Appointee to the Board of Game.

KAREN LINNELL
Glennallen, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Appointee to the Board of Game.

LEWIS BRADLEY, representing himself
MatSu Valley, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

GREG TURNER, representing himself
Delta Junction, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

BRUCE CAIN, representing himself
Glennallen, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game.

DICK BURLEY, representing himself
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

SAM ROHRER, President
Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA)
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game.

RICHARD BISHOP
Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC)
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed Ms. Linnell's appointment to the BOG.

JAMES LOW, representing himself
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

BEN STEVENS
Tanana Chief's Conference
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game.

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director
Resident Hunters of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

NICOLE BORROMEO, Executive Vice President and General Counsel
Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game.

JEFF SAXE, representing himself
Valdez, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

FAYE EWAN, representing herself
Copper Center, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game.

AARON BLOOMQUIST, representing himself

Copper Center, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported Ms. Linnell's and Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game.

SENATOR BERT STEDMAN

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 88.

WYN MENEFEE, Deputy Director

Trust Land Office

Mental Health Trust

Department of Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Commented on SB 88.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:30:14 PM](#)

CHAIR CATHY GIESSEL called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Stedman, Coghill, Meyer, Wielechowski, and Chair Giessel.

SB 58-DEPT OF LAW: ADVOCACY BEFORE FERC

[3:30:47 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of SB 58. She said it was introduced by the Rules Committee at the request of the Governor. The Department of Law (DOL) is the bill manager. Public testimony was heard on Monday and closed. The department is here to answer questions today. She asked if there were any questions on SB 58.

[3:30:59 PM](#)

SENATOR VON IMHOF joined the meeting.

[3:31:45 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL moved to report SB 58 from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, the motion carried.

[3:31:56 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES joined committee.
At ease.

Confirmation Hearing: Board of Game

[3:34:22 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of the Board of Game nominees.

[3:34:27 PM](#)

TOM LAMAL, Appointee, Board of Game, Fairbanks, Alaska, related that he was born in Ashland, Wisconsin, in 1948 and enjoyed great hunting and fishing there. He probably read "Call of the Wild" by Jack London 30 times when he was in elementary school, so Alaska was on his radar from the third grade on. He went to Regis College in Denver, Colorado, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and a teaching certificate. He came to Alaska after graduation in 1971. He met his wife, Kate, in 1982 in Livengood where she was exploring for gold, and they were married in 1983. She is his best friend and hunting partner. They also enjoy retriever training, field trial training, rafting, cross country skiing, flying, and gold mining in Alaska.

MR. LAMAL said he has had jobs that have given him the opportunity to live and work in several areas of Alaska. In the early 1970s he worked for the Division of Aviation, surveying in bush airstrips on the Seward Peninsula and the West Coast of Alaska. He also worked on the pipeline staking out the Haul Road from the Yukon to Prudhoe Bay. Then he worked on the main line after the road was built. Surveying also gave him the opportunity to work on remote defense sites and airstrips throughout the Brooks Range.

MR. LAMAL said he was in Southeast for a while working on a seine boat, fishing from British Columbia to Juneau. He also drifted several years in Bristol Bay and had a Lower Yukon drift permit and a Norton Sound herring permit. He taught school in Fairbanks for 16 years, which allowed him to keep commercial fishing, because he had the summers off. Working in the school system gave him the opportunity to facilitate the hunter education program in the Fairbanks schools. He is a life member of the National Rifle Association (NRA), the Wild Sheep Foundation, and several other organizations like Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Fairbanks Retriever Club, Resident Hunters of Alaska, Rough Grouse Society, Alaska Airman, Alaska Waterfowl Association, and others.

MR. LAMAL said he has been contemplating ways to maintain the ability of Alaskans to have quality hunting experiences and he

is honored that the governor chose him for this position. He feels he can be effective in maintaining this experience.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked why he resigned from the Alaska Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

MR. LAMAL said he resigned from the commission after he quit teaching, because he didn't think he would have the pulse of what was going on in the schools.

SENATOR COGHILL thanked him for being willing to serve and added that every email he has received says his credibility is very high. Allocation is one of the issues the Interior struggles with, he said, but the antlerless moose hunt continually raises its head and asked if that is something that the board deals with in a big way or if it is a department policy issue.

MR. LAMAL said normally the department does studies and recommends shooting cows or not. The board has to approve what the department presents to them.

SENATOR COGHILL said he personally isn't a fan of antlerless moose hunts, and asked if Mr. Lamal had been in on some of those discussions and if he holds a particular view.

MR. LAMAL said he is not a fan shooting cow moose either, but he wasn't saying he would never vote for a cow season if such a situation arose. His feeling is that in managing for abundance, there are a lot of moose there will also be a lot wolves. So, trappers can trap the wolves and people can harvest moose. Therefore, until there is a crisis he doesn't see the reason to shoot the cows. Wolves are a big issue right now and people want to see them.

[3:41:15 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL said the bear population is another big issue for predator management and the wolves and bear are probably the hardest to control under intensive management, and asked if he had been a part of a discussion on any way to better manage bears or if it is something the state is already doing well.

MR. LAMAL said black bears are more predacious on moose than wolves especially in the spring when they are calving. So, he has no problem with bear baiting and predator control on bears.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if he was involved in any of the discussions about flying in for sheep hunts.

MR. LAMAL said he is quite aware of proposal 207. He doesn't approve of it, but for a different reason than most people do. He doesn't approve of it because it was a board-generated proposal. He feels that proposals should come from the public, and then the board should decide if they are going to oppose or support those proposals. This proposal came about because some people were upset with people flying around looking for sheep. Well, he has a super cub and doesn't do that; he doesn't approve of people who do that either. Dr. Todd Brinkman did a survey that indicated other things were more important to residents than airplanes and sheep.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if that resulted in an allocation for local sheep hunts.

[3:44:11 PM](#)

MR. LAMAL responded no. Dr. Brinkman had two surveys: one was a random survey that picked several people throughout the state and the other was a non-random survey where people could weigh in on the issue. In the random survey, 77 percent of the people said that non-residents were the problem. In the non-random survey, 100 percent said non-residents were the problem.

[3:45:19 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked what he thought about allowing moose hunts in the Anchorage Bowl.

MR. LAMAL answered that he doesn't go to Anchorage and isn't that familiar with the problem. Fairbanks had moose hunts in the past, but not now.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said another issue that pops up every other year is establishing a buffer zone in Denali State Park to protect the wolves in Denali National Park. What are his thoughts on that?

MR. LAMAL answered that he would not vote for the buffer zone. He understands people wanting wildlife viewing, but the animals migrate in and out of the park all the time. In his recent trip to Tanzania he saw many protected animals in the wildlife viewing areas, but outside those areas where hunting is allowed the animals are wary of hunters and all you see is dust. Tags are allocated for hunting outside of the parks. It's kind of cool that the hunters and the park people worked the issue out together. He said wolves travel a lot and that they go from his place on the Wood River to the park in any one day.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if spotting or land and shoot is something he would support for predator control.

MR. LAMAL answered he supports the most economic and most humane way to control animal populations. He would have no problem with aerial shooting a pack of wolves, but not harassing them in the process.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he supported bear baiting outside of Denali National Park.

MR. LAMAL said he doesn't have a problem with bear baiting, but he supports not allowing bear baiters to shoot wolves over bear bait in the spring when their hides aren't valuable. He also said trapping for wolves shouldn't be banned.

[3:50:16 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he supported bear baiting but not wolf baiting - if it were the most economical way to get rid of them.

MR. LAMAL said he wasn't familiar with wolf baiting, and that all trappers have something to attract animals to their traps.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if he is okay with bear baiting outside of Denali Park.

MR. LAMAL answered yes.

[3:50:56 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL asked if aerial wolf hunting is permitted in the State of Alaska.

MR. LAMAL answered if the Board of Game authorizes it in certain areas.

CHAIR GIESSEL said the state has predator control, but it doesn't do aerial wolf hunting.

MR. LAMAL said he stood corrected.

SENATOR VON IMHOF thanked him for being here today and in person, and asked what he has done in particular to prepare for this position in the time since he was initially appointed.

MR. LAMAL replied that he just had both knees replaced and was recuperating from that and then was in Tanzania for a month. He has kept up with reading the proposal books and talking to friends who had attended the meetings.

CHAIR GIESSEL said he mentioned being part of Resident Hunters of Alaska and BOG folks are supposed to come in with an open mind, and asked if he feels his organization affiliation would bias him related to guides and out-of-state hunters.

MR. LAMAL responded that people get labeled and there is no way around it. When he was a teacher he would invite people on both sides of an issue to talk. He told his kids if you don't listen to other people they are not going to listen to you. Even if you don't agree with how somebody thinks, if you listen to what they have to say, you will learn something and become better educated; maybe they will convince you and maybe you'll convince them. It has always been his policy to be open minded.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI read regulation 5 AAC 92.110 on control of predation by wolves. He didn't know if it had been repealed or not, but it's showing up on the state website right now. It says: "The commissioner or the commissioner's designee including contracted agents or other governmental agencies may reduce wolf populations in an efficient manner by any means, but as safely and humanely as practical including the use of a helicopter."

CHAIR GIESSEL thanked Mr. Lamal.

[3:56:30 PM](#)

KAREN LINNELL, Glennallen, Alaska, Appointee, Board of Game, said she has been in Alaska all her life, but went to South Carolina for a few months. She has lived in many places around the state including Soldotna, Anchorage, Fairbanks, Chistochina, Valdez, and now Glennallen. She is Ahtna Athabascan and Tlingit from Kake.

As chair of the Wrangell/St. Elias Subsistence Resource Commission (SRC), Ms. Linnell said she wanted to thank them for SR 4 opposing federal overreach.

MS. LINNELL said her activities in wildlife management started when she got on the Ahtna board and became involved with Ahtna's CNT and went to many BOG meetings. She became vice chair for the Copper Basin Advisory Committee (AC), but she resigned that post when she was appointed to the BOG in November. When she became involved with the Copper Basin AC it was to try to effect

positive change in terms of what is best for the resource. In doing that, she learned to talk and listen to both sides: they can agree to disagree, but they are still neighbors. She also chaired the governor's transition committee on wildlife that included environmental folks, the non-consumptive users, guide outfitters, former department staff, and subsistence users. They were able to come to a consensus that the wildlife resource is the most important piece and that having healthy populations benefits all Alaskans. That is one of the goals they put forward to the governor.

SENATOR STEDMAN said it was good to hear she has family in Southeast and a background on Southeast issues and asked her to elaborate a little more on that.

MS. LINNELL responded that she grew up in the North, but her mother was born and raised in Kake and she still has family there. Her mother eventually went to the Children's Home in Sitka and later went to Sheldon Jackson. A lot of Ms. Linnell's family are in Juneau today for the Gold Medal Tournament.

SENATOR COGHILL thanked her for being willing to serve. He said it's very seldom that people hear of Eastern Alaska, but it's important to have someone familiar with that area. Because of her work with Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission and the board she could maybe explain where the differences are and where the tensions rise and comment on whether she could look past some of those tensions.

MS. LINNELL answered that she didn't see tension. They all want the same thing: healthy populations and access to those animals. The Commission has been working with Ahtna, Inc., and have done roughly 1,500 acres of moose habitat improvement projects using mechanical manipulation and they are looking at doing some community wildfire protection plans around three communities. There are three ways to make wildlife habitat: mechanical manipulation, fire, and hand manipulation (planting of trees, etc.); so, they are trying to integrate all of those.

Right now they have been working with Ahtna and the USDA to enhance the fire line on the north side of Glennallen. Instead of just a straight fire line that is there now they are looking at using pockets of moose browse to break up the tree stands to lessen the fire danger. The SRC also wants to protect access and subsistence uses in the park.

MS. LINNELL said she hoped to marry her experience on the Copper Basin AC and the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission to see what works best across the different landscapes. The animals know no boundaries and cross them all the time. When you talk subsistence with park folks they are talking about rural residents and when they talk about sport users they are talking about folks that are non-federally qualified. With state folks subsistence users is still an ambiguous term and sport users are the non-residents who come to Alaska to hunt. So, there is a vocabulary difference. If that can be improved to where they understand each other, they can maybe get rid of a lot of differences. Again, they all want the same thing: healthy populations and a habitat that can sustain those populations.

[4:08:38 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL asked what the SRC is.

MS. LINNELL replied it is the Wrangell Saint Elias Subsistence Resources Commission that is tasked with protecting subsistence access, which is for federally qualified users.

SENATOR COGHILL said when she sits on the BOG she will have to put on a little different hat than looking at it from both the resource conservation and the SRC views and asked if she would be able to do that comfortably.

MS. LINNELL replied that being a tribal member, she has had to change hats frequently, because representing small communities requires being able to wear multiple hats, as well as wear the tribal hat in dealing with council business and the corporate hat in dealing with corporate business. Sometimes they don't get along so well. But the vocabulary issue is the same for party lines and for boundaries and they should be able to work through those issues.

SENATOR COGHILL said coming from the Ahtna region she has a lot of knowledge, but that region also has a lot of visitors from other areas of the state, because it's on the road system and it happens to be a good game area. It is an intense area, but it needs to be figured out.

MS. LINNELL agreed and said finding that balance and looking at both sides is something she can bring to the table. She has experience on the federal side and can talk to those issues. She has heard quite often that they have a federal priority and that's good enough, but when you look at the little sliver of federal land that is available for hunting in that unit, it's

not as large as one would think. That got demonstrated by Bureau of Land Management staff at a recent meeting; it opened some eyes and came from the mouths of others besides Ahtna folks. Maybe it's just a question of having the right people in the room to be able to share that balance.

[4:12:38 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if she thought the Alaska Constitution should be amended to comply with Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) or the other way around.

MS. LINNELL said that is way above her pay grade, and that would have been an easier fix a while ago, but not now.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said the problem has still not been solved, and as a BOG member she would be in a position to take a leadership role in solving it.

MS. LINNELL said she wouldn't be dealing with that issue as a BOG member. That will be coming from the public to the legislature. She added that the local folks at a BOG meeting talk well with each other and the biologists from the park and the state work well together, but the dialogue changes when it gets higher up in the ranks. A lot of that could be driven on the federal side from D.C. and some of it is driven by mandates. Some education could happen there, especially in regards to ANILCA. She has mentioned to the delegation that the Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service need to know more about ANILCA and what its mandates are. They can't do this top down, cookie-cutter approach across the nation and have it fit what is mandated in Alaska.

[4:15:50 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said the fish and game website says the board is also involved with setting policy and direction for the management of the state's wildlife resources.

MS. LINNELL agreed.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said that's very much in her tasks.

MS. LINNELL agreed, but said the BOG has no authority to move a constitutional amendment forward.

SENATOR HUGHES thanked Ms. Linnell for being here today and acknowledged her wealth of information and experience. She said

she also appreciates the fact that Ms. Linell is experienced in trading off various hats. Senator Hughes said she represents a district that likes to go into Game Management Unit 13 and her understanding is that Ahtna has proposed a preference for the local folks and yet the State Constitution and the McDowell case say the BOG cannot allocate based on where people live, and that will need to be reconciled even though her goal is healthy populations.

SENATOR STEDMAN said most folks in rural Alaska could be expected to support subsistence. His district has one town that is not a subsistence community, and one of the most sensitive local issues that comes up is when the federal government looks at a particular community and decides if they want to rule it as non-subsistence. There is no interest in going to non-subsistence, in fact there is an interest in the one community to convert to subsistence. They are just forced out of it by the federal government.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if at this point she is still chair of the Intertribal Resource Conservation Commission.

MS. LINNELL replied no; she is the executive director.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if that creates a conflict.

MS. LINNELL replied the commission is working with Ahtna through Department of Agriculture (USDA) to create moose browse projects and has an MOA with the USDA and Department of Interior to cooperatively manage wildlife on federal lands. At this stage no one knows what that is, but it will immediately create a subsistence local advisory committee that will consist of some appointees from the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, the Eastern Interior and Southcentral Rural Advisory committees, and from the Denali and Wrangell St. Elias SRCs, and ADF&G will get to appoint somebody to make a plan on federal lands within Ahtna traditional territory including BLM unencumbered lands and the park.

SENATOR COGHILL said it looks like she is trying to increase species management and that won't conflict with the BOG allocation focus.

MS. LINNELL agreed. It's long been her view that not acting when there is an abundance of bears or wolves is choosing one species over another. There is an imbalance that can be seen in the decline of the Shoshana and Mentasta caribou herds. More of the

traditional trapping could be used, but there are access issues. So, if access can be improved within those areas, maybe that type of management could be improved.

CHAIR GIESSEL asked if she is an advocate for science-based management and intensive management of species.

MS. LINNELL answered yes; there needs to be a balance. At one time the Copper Basin AC put forward three proposals: one to set the population objectives, one to set triggers for when intensive management would go into effect, and the other to trigger when cow hunts would come into effect. But that holistic type of approach doesn't always come across well, because it had to be submitted in three separate proposals (because of codification) and none of them passed.

CHAIR GIESSEL thanked her and opened public comment on both appointees.

[4:24:37 PM](#)

LEWIS BRADLEY, representing himself, MatSu Valley, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. Mr. Lamal is very concerned with management issues and understands the BOG process. He has an open mind, is fair and honestly seeks solutions to issues, and wants what is best for the wildlife. He once said that listening to all sides of an issue is very important in making informed decisions.

[4:27:29 PM](#)

GREG TURNER, representing himself, Delta Junction, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. He is an enthusiastic outdoorsman who has a deep respect and appreciation for all Alaska has to offer. He will serve with fairness, honesty, and integrity.

[4:28:39 PM](#)

BRUCE CAIN, representing himself, Glennallen, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game. He has known Ms. Linnell for 25 years and worked with her on a number of issues. She has a lot of experience with the BOG process and knows the federal issues and can be a bridge to resolving some of those issues. She is a hard worker, studies issues, and listens; she can make a balanced and informed decision.

[4:30:09 PM](#)

DICK BURLEY, representing himself, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. He is was a very

respected teacher; he also served on the Fairbanks AC where he did a good job. He approaches everything he does with enthusiasm and has done a good job, and he will continue that if he is confirmed to the BOG.

[4:31:15 PM](#)

SAM ROHRER, President, Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA), Kodiak, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game. She will be an asset to the board process, especially with all the recent issues in the Ahtna region. She will bring information to the board and back to the region. They also appreciate having one more woman's voice on the board as there is now only one woman member.

[4:32:27 PM](#)

RICHARD BISHOP, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), Fairbanks, Alaska, opposed Ms. Linnell's appointment to the BOG. Due to her responsibilities in the Ahtna community she has an "intractable conflict of interest" with the duties and obligations of a BOG member, specifically regarding the MOA she signed as executive director of the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission with the Department of Interior. The MOA anticipates establishing a new federal Ahtna cooperative structure under the Federal Subsistence Board for regulation, management, and harvest allocation of moose, caribou, and other game and fish on federal lands adjacent to Ahtna lands and the eight villages with triable representation. This structure would basically shut out the State of Alaska's game management, BOG, and state advisory committee process on federal lands in the area and could impair state management on adjacent state and private lands.

He said only token, meaningless participation in the MOA proposal is offered to the state with a caveat that the state would take no action on nearby private lands that would interrupt the decisions of the advisory committee set up under the MOA. Allocations of harvest would favor tribal members of the eight villages in that area. That amounts to a racial priority on top of the existing federal rural subsistence priority. The goals of the department and the Ahtna Commission are substantially inconsistent with the State of Alaska's Constitutional and statutory responsibility and authority.

[4:35:56 PM](#)

JAMES LOW, representing himself, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. Most of Mr. Low's contacts with Mr. Lamal were through the after school program as

part of the crew of the ADF&G hunter education basic course where he was a teacher. He was also invited to talk to Mr. Lamal's Alaska studies class on the topic of wildlife enforcement. He would bring in speakers from both sides of an issue making sure his students were well informed and then let them make up their own minds.

[4:37:47 PM](#)

BEN STEVENS, Tanana Chief's Conference, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game. They believe she has the skills, abilities, and knowledge to serve the people of Alaska well. She is able to find consensus among seemingly incompatible philosophies and has a wide array of experiences and a favorable track record when it comes to the various regulatory regimes in the state of Alaska including the Copper River AC.

She also honor's the Alaska State Constitution's Article 8, in particular, regarding the sustained yield principle and considering the health and productivity of the land as a factor in order to achieve and maintain abundant wildlife resources.

[4:40:11 PM](#)

MARK RICHARDS, Executive Director, Resident Hunters of Alaska, Fairbanks, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. Mr. Lamal has been involved in wildlife management and conservation issues for a long time. He epitomizes the type of Alaskan who would be an asset on the board. With his personal experience across Alaska as a hunter and fisherman, as an instructor and board member of several hunting conservation organizations, and serving on the Fairbanks F&G AC, he can step right in on the Board of Game, because he knows how it works. He listens to all sides of an issue and respects all opinions and, in fact, encourages informed debate from all sides.

[4:41:43 PM](#)

NICOLE BORROMEO, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), Anchorage, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game. She supported and echoed Mr. Rohrer's comments from the Alaska Professional Hunters Association (APHA). Ms. Linnell has other traits that will make an ideal BOG member: she is passionate and cares deeply about the purpose of the board, namely conserving and developing Alaska's wildlife resources. Second, she has the experience that is required of a board member and is a life-long Alaskan including a hunter and fisher. She is from a rural area

understands the BOG purposes very intimately. Third, she has the time necessary to devote to this board. She is very attentive and monitors all of the BOG proposals and findings and stays up-to-date on them. And fifth, she is collegial and ready to take on tough issues and work through them. She is comfortable with healthy conflicts and knows how to achieve resolution while keeping working relationships intact.

MS. BORROMEO said AFN does not believe Ms. Linnell has a conflict of interest as Mr. Bishop stated. In regards to the state participation in the MOU with the Department of Interior, that is something that they and Ahtna had pushed for, and the door is still open to state participation. This is not a race-based priority, because the committee well knows Indians are classified as a political entity under federal law.

[4:44:10 PM](#)

JEFF SAXE, representing himself, Valdez, Alaska, supported Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. He has been around the state for a long time and has seen a lot of things go on. He would be very open minded on both sides of an issue.

[4:45:13 PM](#)

FAYE EWAN, representing herself, Copper Center, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's appointment to the Board of Game. She has a lot of traditional knowledge about moose and caribou and all the land around Alaska. She is not biased or prejudiced. Ahtna hired her to do her job; it has nothing to do with the Board of Game where she would be representing the State of Alaska.

MS. EWAN said in being a council member and on different boards in the Ahtna region, she works closely with Ms. Linnell. They frequently talk about hunting in the Copper River and other areas, the shortage of game, and how many times they heard on the Yukon River there was no fish and no moose. They always talked about how they should be sharing with the other regions. Ms. Linnell never said anything bad about anyone on the boards or any agencies.

[4:47:26 PM](#)

AARON BLOOMQUIST, representing himself, Copper Center, Alaska, supported Ms. Linnell's and Mr. Lamal's appointment to the Board of Game. He said he lived in Anchorage for 10 years and was chairman of the Fish and Game Advisory Committee. He lived in Tok for six years and now he lives in Copper Center where he has spent the last 15 summers. He served on the previous governor's

transition team with Ms. Linnell and got to know her pretty well. She is a great leader and a great consensus builder. She is open minded and can really put a few people together that don't necessarily agree and get some stuff done.

MR. BLOOMQUIST said he had known Mr. Lamal a little bit for the last six or seven years and thinks he would also be a suitable board member.

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CHAIR GIESSEL found no further comments and closed public testimony. She said in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Resources Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be forwarded to a joint session for consideration: Board of Game: Karen Linnell and Thomas Lamal. This does not reflect an intent by any of the members to vote for or against the confirmation of the individuals during any further sessions.

SB 88-AK MENTAL HEALTH TRUST LAND EXCHANGE

[4:49:44 PM](#)

CHAIR GIESSEL announced consideration of SB 88 that deals with land exchanges related to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Office.

SENATOR STEDMAN, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 88, said this measure facilitates a land trade between the Alaska Mental Health Trust and the U.S. Forest Service in Southeast. The federal government will receive 20,000 acres and will give up 18,000 acres. This land exchange has been going on for many years and is a win-win situation.

He explained that some lands are adjacent to communities like Petersburg and Ketchikan that the Mental Health Trust had viewed for timber harvest for revenue, and both communities wanted to have the timber harvest not so close to their communities and their view sheds. So, that facilitates some of these parcels; it improves the logging productivity available from Alaska land. It has been worked through many meetings with environmental groups, communities, Mental Health, and the Forest Service.

WYN MENEFEE, Deputy Director, Trust Land Office, Mental Health Trust, Anchorage, Alaska, said essentially, the Alaska Mental Health Trust is the foundational purpose for this exchange. It is a perpetual trust that helps support comprehensive integrated mental health services in Alaska. He provided a list of beneficiaries.

He said the trust gives about \$20 million annually to projects, activities, state agencies, and non-profits statewide. In Southeast they have done capital grants like the \$100,000 capital grant to Petersburg Mental Health Services and the \$10 million grant to help fund Medicare. Revenues are needed to support that and to keep the trust alive. So, the job of the Trust Land Office is basically as a contractor to the Trust Authority. They manage the non-cash assets: the land and resources, in the best interests of the trust. They manage multiple asset classes and one of those is timber.

This exchange will help diversify their portfolio; it will increase timber revenues over current land holdings and it will protect the trust corpus by not devaluing timber assets in Southeast by letting the timber industry fail, because they would end up having no one to purchase their timber.

MR. MENEFEER showed them a picture of trust land holdings currently scattered throughout Southeast Alaska and explained that the land exchange will take about 18,000 acres of trust lands which are primarily adjacent to communities in Southeast Alaska in exchange for 20,000 acres that are more removed on Prince of Wales Island and Shelter Cove. He explained that the trust does subdivisions and commercial transaction leases as well as timber harvest on their lands, but there is a lot of resistance to having these activities next to communities. It's basically an equal value land exchange; the idea is to allow timber extraction in an area that won't conflict with communities.

The exchange has two phases: because the timber industry is at real risk of going under for the lack of timber, some timber is needed immediately to keep it going. So, some parcels will be exchanged within one year and the remaining will be exchanged within two years. It just gives the Forest Service more time to get the appraisals done for the other parcels.

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MR. MENEFEER said among the benefits of the exchange are that fact that it consolidates trust land ownership, which is good for management; it replaces lands adjacent to the communities with ones that are more conducive for timber harvest; it will generate about \$40-60 million over the 20 years; it will protect both timber and tourism industries; it will save real jobs; and it protects the view sheds and certain old growth stands.

He clarified that the timber industry impacts the economy in many ways: stevedores, equipment rental, maintenance, purchase, transportation, timber fellers, and cruisers. Any timber harvested on trust lands to be received via the exchange would be done in an environmentally responsible manner, because they are required to follow the Alaska Forest Practices Act that has been demonstrated to be effective at protecting salmon streams and water quality.

Why do it now? Mr. Menefee answered that this exchange is the result of about 10 years of planning and public input from the Tongass Futures Roundtable conservation groups which consists of 35 different parties, the Forest Service and communities. The Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC) expressed some concern that one of the parcels, the No Name Bay parcel, could be exchanged because it is involved in litigation. However, the Department of Law (DOL) determined that the trust has clear title to that parcel and the lawsuit in no way prohibits the State Legislature from enacting the exchange in this legislation.

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Further, he said the timber industry with its lack of timber to market will go under in two years, and they are trying to give them timber before they leave, because once it is gone, it doesn't just start back up. People move and it's just not easy to say come on up and cut our timber. So, Alaska would lose a market.

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He explained that the Forest Service has the majority of the timber supply in Southeast and they have withdrawn and locked up much of the land. That means there is a dependency on the Mental Health Trust Land Office, the University, the State Forestry, and the Forest Service to all work together on the transition to a sustainable young growth harvest, but timber needs to be provided in the transition period.

MR. MENEFEЕ said that Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan introduced SB 131 and Representative Young introduced HR 513 in Washington, D.C., that basically direct the Forest Service to do the exchange. They expect things to start moving very soon (this spring) on the federal side. If it's approved, they would start right away on working with the Forest Service to get the appraisals and surveys done within a one-year timeframe. This issue has a lot of support although most of it is for 2016 federal legislation that is the same piece of legislation. It is

a positive revenue generating exchange and the trust needs those revenues to provide for its beneficiaries. He added that the trust supports those programs without going to the general fund.

CHAIR GIESSEL said a number of people were on line to testify.

SENATOR STEDMAN said he would rather have another meeting so people could have ample time to say their piece than try to run them short because the committee is out of time.

CHAIR GIESSEL said she would hold SB 88 and bring it back at the earliest opportunity.

5:05:31 PM

CHAIR GIESSEL adjourned the Senate Resources Committee meeting at 5:05 p.m.