

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 5, 2026
3:31 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Vice Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Senator Cathy Tilton

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 188
"An Act expanding the Tanana Valley State Forest; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 188
SHORT TITLE: TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST
SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

05/02/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/02/25	(S)	STA, RES
02/03/26	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/03/26	(S)	Heard & Held
02/03/26	(S)	MINUTE (STA)
02/05/26	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis for SB 188.

JEREMY DOUSE, State Forester and Director
Forestry and Fire Protection
Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding SB 188.

JOE YOUNG, Owner
Young's Timber Inc.
Tok, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 188.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:31:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Gray-Jackson, Tilton, Wielechowski and Chair Kawasaki.

SB 188-TANANA VALLEY STATE FOREST

[3:32:19 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 188 "An Act expanding the Tanana Valley State Forest; and providing for an effective date."

[3:33:33 PM](#)

BRENT GOODRUM, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage, Alaska, provided the sectional analysis for SB 188 and moved to slide 9.

[Original punctuation provided.]

Section 1 (Page 1) Repeals and reenacts AS 41.17.400(d), Public Resources; Forest Resources and Practices; Article 6 State Forests; Tanana Valley State Forest. The reenacted section describes the parcels comprising the Tanana Valley State Forest. Included are the existing Tanana Valley State Forest and 43 new units.

Section 2 (Page 67) Adds a new subsection to AS 41.17.400, Public Resources; Forest Resources and Practices; Article 6 State Forests; Tanana Valley State Forest, defining "section" and "sections" as both surveyed sections and surveyed protracted sections.

Section 3 (Page 67) Adds a new section to uncodified law allowing the Department of Natural

Resources to adopt regulations to implement the bill.

Section 4 (Page 67) Sets an immediate effective date for section 3.

Section 5 (Page 67) Sets a July 1, 2025, effective date for sections 1 and 2.

MR. GOODRUM made a correction to the sectional analysis in Section 2; surveyed protracted sections should say "un-surveyed".

[3:35:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI referenced slide 3 of the presentation, noting that the map essentially shows a "checkerboard" pattern. He pointed out that some areas are contiguous and adjacent to the proposed orange zones but are not included within them. He asked whether the deputy commissioner or the state forester could explain why the areas appear so sporadically placed.

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JEREMY DOUSE, State Forester and Director, Forestry and Fire Protection, Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Anchorage, Alaska, answered questions regarding SB 188. He explained that the checkerboard, non-contiguous pattern of the state forest results from several factors, including mixed land ownership such as federal and military lands that interrupt state lands. He said the planning process identified more beneficial uses for certain state parcels, such as mining due to mineral resources or habitat protection, while some forestry lands also carry dual classifications, like forestry and habitat.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that earlier in the fall there was a comment from the Department of the Army's Installation Management Command at Fort Wainwright. The comment, which included a two-page document and a map, addressed aspects of the proposed state forest expansion and referenced "disposable interest" in the area. He asked if there were any comments on the comment.

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MR. DOUSE explained that the Army's concerns relate to areas north of the Donnelly Training Area West. Although the land is currently state-owned, it is designated for disposal and could become private property, potentially for settlement or remote recreation. He said the Army is concerned that private

development near the installation boundary could interfere with training activities and pose safety risks due to a history of wildfires in the area.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that some committee members are possibly visiting the Joint Pacific Multi-Readiness Center (JPMRC), including the Donnelly Dome area, which is used for training activities such as strafing exercises. He explained that, while not speaking on behalf of the Army, his understanding of the letter suggests the Army would prefer not to have nearby private development.

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SENATOR BJORKMAN noted that a large, contiguous area of state land appears west of Delta on the map and in online mapping tools. He asked why some portions of this area are included in the proposed state forest while others are carved out and not included.

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MR. DOUSE explained that the land is currently classified for remote recreation. Although it is state land, it has a different classification and is designated for disposal rather than forestry.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 188.

[3:41:29 PM](#)

JOE YOUNG, Owner, Young's Timber Inc., Tok, Alaska, testified in support of SB 188 and stated that Young's Timber Inc., a multi-generational family business, supports SB 188 to expand the Tanana State Forest. The expansion would transfer management to the Alaska Division of Forestry, protect boreal forest from development, reduce state costs, and provide a stable long-term timber supply. He said his company has invested about \$1 million in new harvesting equipment and noted that timber harvest also supports multiple uses, such as berry picking, trapping, hunting, and fire protection.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that the map does not clearly show the area near Tok and asked whether it is forested. He commented it is difficult to understand the landscape without seeing the land in person.

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MR. YOUNG replied that the area is a continuous forest and noted that wildfires are a major concern in the Tok area, referencing the 1990 Tok River Fire. He said that mosaic-style timber harvesting can help mitigate fire risk while also maintaining an aesthetically pleasing landscape from the air.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI kept public testimony open for SB 188.

[CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 188 in committee.]

[3:48:40 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 3:48 p.m.