

SB

159

<TARGET><BILL>SB 159</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
159</SUBJECT><COMM>HCRA27</COMM></TARGET>

Senator Linda Menard

Session

State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801
Phone: (907) 465-6600
Fax: (907) 465-3805



Interim

600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
Phone: (907) 376-3370
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Alaska State Legislature

Sponsor Statement Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 159

The Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 159 will establish a new Susitna State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest and exclude private in-holdings from the proposed forest. Further, this CS includes intent language that urges the governor to work to acquire or purchase forest land in the Tongass National Forest.

With a state forest designation, the Division of Forestry will be able to manage for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses. The Susitna State Forest would be the fourth state forest established in Alaska, joining the Haines State Forest, the Tanana Valley State Forest and the Southeast State Forest.

The proposed Susitna State Forest includes **33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres**. The parcels are Forestry classified lands located in 14 large management blocks listed below. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water Management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

In the region where the State Forest is proposed, timber sales and personal use sales for fuelwood are growing steadily. Local mills depend on state timber for their raw material supply, and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of roundwood, chips or wood pellets for both commercial and residential space heating.

The state is committed to long-term management solutions by:

- maximizing the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base;
- developing access and encouraging a broad range of multiple uses on state forest lands including motorized uses;
- providing economic opportunities to the communities, businesses and residents of the region.

Legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that some land will remain available for long-term forest management and the region will retain large open spaces of public lands for the range of benefits residents of the region currently enjoy. It will also allow for mining on state forest land.

The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.200-.230. Lands in the State Forest would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat and harvest and recreational activities.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

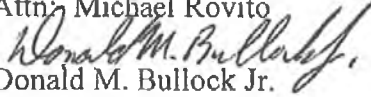
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

March 30, 2012

SUBJECT: Sectional summary for CSSB 159(RES)
(Work Order No. 27-LS1179E)

TO: Senator Linda Menard
Attn: Michael Rovito

FROM: 
Donald M. Bullock Jr.
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

Section 1. Describes the state-owned or acquired land and water to be included in the Susitna State Forest. Requires the commissioner of natural resources to prepare a management plan for the forest, and authorizes the commissioner to establish transportation corridors within the forest.

Section 2. Urges the governor to acquire additional forested land for the state from the Tongass National Forest.

Section 3. Provides a July 1, 2012 effective date for the Act.

DMB:ljw
12-242.ljw

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version CSSB 159(RES)
 Fiscal Note Number 1
 (S) Publish Date 3/21/12

Identifier (file name) SB159-DNR-FMD-3-9-12 Dept. Affected Natural Resources
 Title An Act establishing the Susitna State Forest; and Appropriation Resource Development
providing for an effective date. Allocation Forest Management & Development
 Sponsor Senator Menard
 Requester Senate Resources OMB Component Number 435

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY13	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF						
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
178	temp code (UGF)						
	TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	***	***	***
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared by John "Chris" Maisch, Division Director
 Division Forest Management & Development
 Approved by Daniel S. Sullivan, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources

Phone 451-2666
 Date/Time 3/9/12 3:00 PM
 Date 3/9/2012

FISCAL NOTE #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 159(RES)

Analysis

This bill would establish a new Susitna State Forest in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys from state lands presently classified for forestry management by the two Area Plans for the region. These lands are currently managed by the Division of Forestry for timber harvest and other multiple uses. Designation of these lands as a state forest will ensure the long-term availability of a timber supply to local commercial and personal use customers, support economic opportunities for the region's communities, improve access to the parcels and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses. The state forest will also directly support a growing interest in wood energy space heating projects by local communities. These projects require a long-term, sustainable supply of wood.

The proposed State Forest includes 33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres and are located in 14 large management blocks. The Susitna State Forest would become part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.010-.230 and will continue to be managed under the provisions of the State Forest Resources and Practices Act (FRPA) which is designed to protect fish habitat and water quality. The forest management plan for the region would be updated via a public process per AS 41.17.230.

Implementation of this bill will not require new positions or funding.

The bill will have no short-term impact to the revenue stream, but will provide for long-term increases in forest productivity and subsequent increased timber revenues.



Public Briefing: SB-159

Susitna State Forest

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

-- DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Background. The state Department of Natural Resources manages over 9.5 million acres of forest land in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. Of this land, timber management is allowed on approximately 2.1 million acres. The state actively manages this timber base to supply wood to local processors. Remaining land is designated primarily for other uses including land sales, recreation, water resources, and fish and wildlife habitat, including over 3.1 million acres of legislatively designated state parks, refuges, and public use areas.

In the region, demand for state timber sales is steady and growing and personal use sales for fuelwood have also increased. Local mills depend heavily on state timber for their raw material supply and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of roundwood, chips or wood pellets for both commercial and residential space heating.

There is also a need to more actively manage lands and vegetation to promote a variety of forest ages to provide for diverse and healthy habitats for wildlife. At the same time, active management will also help reduce wildland fire risk by breaking up large fuel types and encouraging initial regeneration by hardwood species.

The state is committed to long-term management solutions by:

- maximizing the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base;
- developing access and encouraging a broad range of multiple uses on state forest lands including motorized uses;
- providing economic opportunities to the communities, businesses and residents of the region.

Legislatively designating a State Forest would ensure that some land will remain available for long-term forest management and the region will retain large open spaces of public lands for the range of benefits residents of the region currently enjoy.

Purpose. This bill would establish a new Susitna State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest. The Division of Forestry will be able to manage the State Forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses.

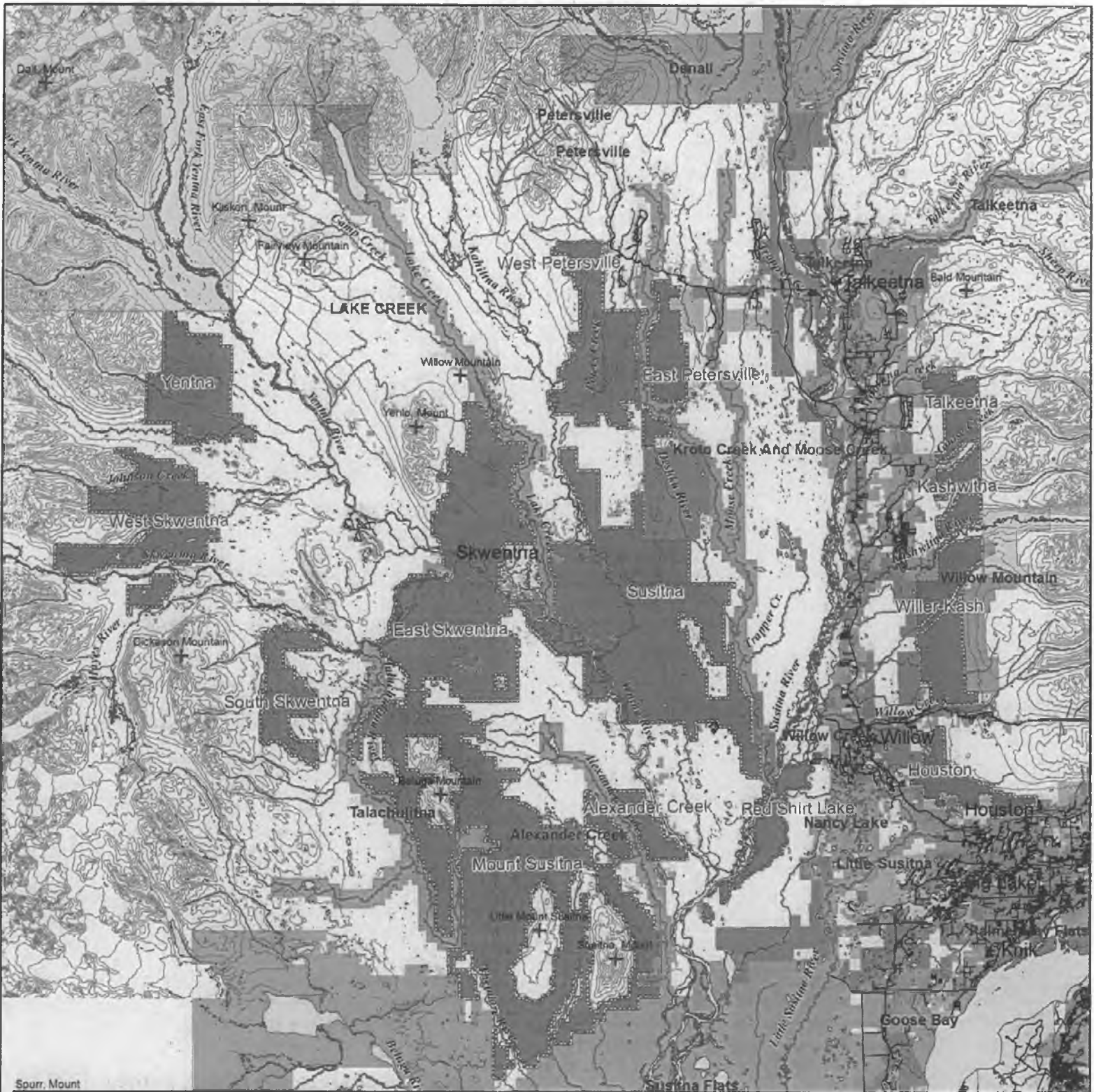
Proposed State Forest Land. The proposed Susitna State Forest includes 33 parcels totaling approximately 763,200 acres (see chart). The parcels are Forestry classified lands located in 14 large management blocks listed below. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water (DML&W) management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

State Forest Management. The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System under AS 41.17.200-.230. Lands in the State Forest would continue to be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat and harvest and recreational activities. State Forest lands would be managed consistent with the management intent under the current Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. Changes to management intent would require public and interagency review through adoption of a State Forest Management Plan under AS 41.17.230. The State Forest Resources Practices Act (FRPA) would apply to management activities on the forest and is designed to protect both fish habitat and water quality. (AS 41.17.010 - .955.) A forestry inventory was completed in 2010 for approximately 75% of the acreage and work is ongoing to complete the project. An interim forest inventory report is available.








PROPOSED SUSITNA STATE FOREST

Parcel	Acreage	General Location	Block
Susitna-Matanuska Area Plan			
P-13a	18,100	Kroto Creek East	East Petersville
P-13b	49,600	Kroto Creek West	West Petersville
P-13c	3,300	Amber Lake	West Petersville
U-26a	35,400	Yentna River West	Yentna
R-03a	6,500	Nakoshna River	Yentna
R-03b	33,600	Skwentna River North	West Skwentna
U-26b	15,500	Skwentna River North	West Skwentna
R-03c	5,100	Hayes River	West Skwentna
M-07a	24,200	Canyon Creek	South Skwentna
M-07b	187,000	Mount Susitna	Mount Susitna
M-07c	2,500	Theodore River	Mount Susitna
M-07d	5,800	Alexander Creek West	Alexander Creek
U-24a	10,300	Alexander Creek East	Alexander Creek
U-04a	500	Kroto Slough	Susitna
U-04b	155,800	Kahiltna River	Susitna
U-07e	104,100	Skwentna Village	East Skwentna
B-10	15,200	Yenlo Creek	East Skwentna
S-35	12,800	South Fork Montana Creek	Talkeetna
Southeast Susitna Area Plan			
U-01a	1,200	Sheep Creek North	Talkeetna
U-01b	6,500	Sheep Creek South	Kashwitna
U-01c	5,800	Kashwitna River	Kashwitna
U-01d	13,900	Little Willow Creek North	Willer-Kash
U-01e	18,600	Willow Creek North	Willer-Kash
U-01f	10,500	Deception Creek	Houston
W-01g	600	Houston	Houston
H-06a	800	Houston	Houston
H-32	500	Houston	Houston
H-06b	3,000	Houston	Houston
P-03	600	Little Susitna North	Houston
P-02	1,600	Little Susitna North	Houston
S-03a	300	Deshka Landing	Red Shirt Lake
S-03b	13,300	Deshka Landing South	Red Shirt Lake
S-03c	700	Susitna Village	Red Shirt Lake
TOTAL	763,200		

Susitna Valley State Forest Blocks



Land Ownership

-  Private Lands
-  ANCSA Native Corporation
-  Matanuska Susitna Borough
-  University of Alaska, Alaska Mental Health Land Trust
-  Federal Government
-  State of Alaska
-  Legislatively Designated Areas



Proposed Susitna Valley State Forest Blocks

0 5 10 20 30

Miles

scale = 1:750,000



Alaska Dept of Natural Resources

Division of Forestry

Forest Resources Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1450
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Land Ownership information provided by
the Matanuska Susitna Borough Information
Technology Department, January 2012.

SB 159
Susitna State Forest

The proposed Susitna State Forest includes 14 management blocks totaling approximately 760,000 acres. The blocks have previously been classified Forestry in the Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. The Division of Forestry worked with the Division of Mining, Land, and Water Management to identify and exclude lands that are priorities for the state land disposal program.

The effect of legislatively designating these lands as State Forest is as follows:

Current Condition	Proposed State Forest
Lands may be designated for disposal through agency action.	This would provide for long term forest management planning. Lands would need to be withdrawn from the State Forest system through legislative action.
Revised area plans may further subdivide the existing forest.	Existing private inholdings would remain. All state land designated for settlement in the current Area Plans would remain available for purchase by the public. Any changes in land classification or use would be addressed in the Susitna State Forest Management Plan.
Reluctance by forest managers to invest public funds if the lands are subject to disposal.	Forest Managers would have the opportunity to invest in long term land management projects without having the lands converted to other uses. For example, the DOF would have the opportunity to collaborate with the Department of Fish and Game on long term wildlife enhancement projects, silvicultural treatments for stand improvement, and other activities that show benefits over time.
Lands are managed for multiple use.	No Change.
Existing mineral entry rights.	The lands would be managed for multiple use and would be open for mineral development as it currently exists.
The Susitna Forestry Guidelines, adopted over 20	The Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act and

years ago and prior to the final revision of the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act (AS 41.17), are used for planning timber harvests in the Susitna Valley.	other guidelines will be incorporated into the Susitna State Forest Management Plan and after adoption will be the basis for timber harvests in the State Forest.
Forests are managed on a sustained yield.	AS 41.17.220 requires the management of State Forests occur on the sustained yield principle.
Access for recreation is limited.	A forest management plan would include a transportation plan that addresses recreational opportunities as roads are developed.
Multiple Area Plans are used for the current management of State land.	A Forest Management Plan as required under AS. 41.17.230 must be adopted within 3 years of the establishment of a state forest. The plan requires a forest inventory and must consider other uses such as mineral extraction, recreation, fish and wildlife, and other traditional uses.

Provided by the Alaska Division of Forestry



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 745-9689 • Fax (907) 745-9669

John.Moosey@matsugov.us

January 18, 2012

The Honorable Senator Linda Menard
Alaska State Capitol
Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Menard,

I am very pleased to send a letter of support for Senate Bill 159 which will establish the Susitna State Forest. This bill will establish a new State Forest from state lands presently used for timber harvest. The Division of Forestry will be able to manage the State Forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors, and retain the land in state ownership for multiple uses.

The Mat-Su Borough and its residents will benefit from a state forest in the form of an economic boost from a sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base. The Susitna State Forest would be managed as part of the State Forest System and would be open for multiple uses, including wildlife habitat, harvest, and recreational activities.

Demand for state timber sales is steady and growing, and personal use sales for fuel wood have also increased. Local mills depend heavily on state timber for their raw material supply and there is a growing interest in the use of wood in the form of round wood, chips or wood pellets for both commercial and residential space heating. At the same time, active management will also help reduce wild land fire risk by breaking up large fuel types and encouraging initial regeneration by hardwood species.

Thank you for the opportunity to endorse this project. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

John M. Moosey
Borough Manager

JM/al



DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT
FOR RUFFED GROUSE, WOODCOCK,
AND OTHER FOREST WILDLIFE
South Central Alaska Chapter
7650 Delridge Circle, Anchorage, Alaska 99507

February 9, 2012

The Honorable Linda Menard
State Capitol Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Menard,

The South Central Alaska Chapter of The Ruffed Grouse Society would like to thank you for submitting Senate Bill 159, creating a State Forest west of the Susitna River. We support creation of this Forest for a multitude of reasons not the least of which is the ability to manage our forest resources for wildlife.

The area west of the Susitna is one of the last remaining large blocks of state land in Southcentral Alaska. Establishing a state forest will ensure that the ever increasing population of this area has access to the outdoor recreation for which our state is famous and that our timber, land and wildlife resources can be managed for the benefit of all Alaskans. A state forest will also help establish and solidify a timber industry for this area. Managed timber harvests benefit wildlife that needs an age diversified forest to thrive and would help reduce the potential for devastating fires such as the Miller Reach catastrophe.

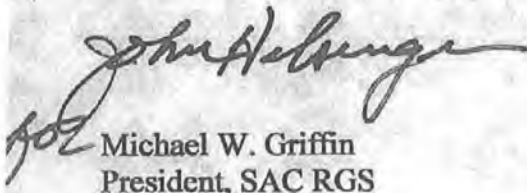
Designation as a State Forest is, we believe, one of the least restrictive land categories possible. It allows for most uses, but would require planning and thought before implementing changes such as roads, mining, campgrounds, etc. The one restriction we know of is transfer of land into private ownership. In the past, the State has been able to meet the recreational needs of the Southcentral population through land transfers to individuals. However, the population is growing and most land with easy access, such as that bordering lakes and rivers, has already been transferred. The net effect is to block access to the remaining area. We realize there are access corridors reserved, but these are not particularly effective when it means parking your plane in front of someone's cabin to walk the right of way to a stream. Land owners tend to view such as an intrusion and clashes ensue. Additionally, owners of private land tend to want to manage all lands within view of their property. This leads to conflict when trying to manage resources on state land. In the Matanuska Valley it has hobbled the ability of Forestry to conduct timber sales and ADF&G to implement habitat improvement projects.

As currently described in SB 159, the State Forest is a convoluted collection of detached parcels taking 16 pages to describe the boundaries. A person out for recreation will have a difficult time trying to determine if they are in or out of the forest. Future disposal of land surrounding these parcels could complicate road development and access to proposed timber sales. Private ownership bounding the forest could result in the NIMBY problems we are already dealing with in other parts of Southcentral.

We would encourage you to expand the proposed boundaries to incorporate all unencumbered state land west of the Susitna River, south of the Denali Park Boundaries, North of Beluga Lake/Beluga River draining into Cook Inlet. As a minimum, the forest boundaries need to be simplified and expanded to create a buffer against treats to proper forest management by private ownership and to ensure reasonable access to the forest is available. This would preserve public access, ensure multiple use of our land, and enhance our wildlife resources for all Alaskans, now and in the future, while encouraging development of a comprehensive timber industry.

This forest will complement the three other state forests that have been successfully established. We urge the legislature to expand and pass SB 159 this session.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John Helinger".

Michael W. Griffin
President, SAC RGS

***Alaska Trappers Association
PO Box 82177
Fairbanks, AK 99708***

**Linda Menard
Alaska State Senator
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801**

February 2, 2012

Re: SB 159 – Susitna State Forest

Dear Senator Menard:

The Alaska Trappers Association is a statewide organization with nearly one thousand members. We are active in Alaska wildlife issues and other resource conservation efforts. We support a very active trapper education program.

ATA supports the CONCEPT of a fourth state forest, but we have serious concerns about how this might affect other consumptive resource use, particularly trapping. Our concern stems primarily from experience with the way that the planning process for the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) in Interior Alaska was politically manipulated by Governor Knowles.

Title 41 (specifically AS 41.17.200) makes it quite clear that the primary purpose of any state forest is to provide a timber base and the opportunity for active forest management and timber harvest. We support and applaud this goal. However, the TVSF Citizens Advisory Committee (a quasi-public agency) was stacked with non-consumptive users and allowed to corrupt and control the planning process to minimize logging, hunting, trapping and motorized access. That serious and systemic problem was exactly what happened when the TVSF Management Plan was rewritten. Environmental groups (enabled, supported and encouraged by the Governor's Office) tied up the planning process for years and manipulated the process. The Governor's Office, rather than the State Forester's

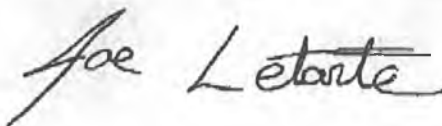
Office, controlled which specific individuals were appointed to the Citizens' Advisory Committee.

Thus, before we can wholeheartedly support your bill, we would prefer to see included some language to prevent or at least minimize this type of political manipulation of the planning process and attempts to preclude the very consumptive uses the State Forest was established to protect. This might entail a slight change to AS 41.17.200. Or perhaps it could be handled with a very clear statement of legislative intent. At a minimum, public discussion during the legislative process regarding this bill should thoroughly air and review the process that took place during the rewriting of the TVSF Management Plan.

Once this concern is addressed, we will be glad to comment on specific acreages and areas proposed for inclusion. However, until we can be sure that trapping (and timber harvest, for that matter) are really protected, we support only the CONCEPT of establishing the Susitna State Forest.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your proposal to establish a Susitna State Forest in South-Central Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joe Letarte".

**Joe Letarte, President
Alaska Trappers Association**



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

Founded 1975

Executive Director

Rick Rogers

2011-2012 Executive Committee

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Lorali Simon

John Sturgeon

Dan Sullivan

Peter Taylor

Michael Terminel

Jan Trigg

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Senator Mark Begich

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Congressman Don Young

Governor Sean Parnell

January 19, 2012

Senators Joe Paskvan and Tom Wagoner
Co-Chairs, Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Senate Bill 159, Susitna State Forest

Dear Senators Paskvan and Wagoner:

The Resource Development Council (RDC) is writing to support Senate Bill 159, which would create the Susitna State Forest over 763,200 acres of state land west of the Parks Highway.

RDC is a statewide, non-profit, membership-funded organization founded in 1975. The RDC membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries, as well as Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to link these diverse interests together to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources currently manages 9.5 million acres of forest land in the Matanuska and Susitna Valleys. Of this land, timber management is allowed on approximately 2.1 million acres. Remaining land is designated for other uses, including land sales, recreation, water resources, and fish and wildlife habitat. Over 3.1 million acres is protected in legislatively-designated state parks, refuges, and public use areas.

The establishment of the Susitna State Forest would ensure that some land would remain available for long-term forest management. It would allow the Division of Forestry to more actively manage lands and vegetation to promote a variety of forest ages, which in turn would maximize the sustainable supply of timber from the state timber base and provide for more diverse and healthy habitats for wildlife. In addition, active management would also help reduce wildfire risk.

The Division of Forestry would manage the state forest for a long-term supply of timber to local processors and retain land in state ownership for other multiple uses. An enhanced long-term timber supply would help support the forest products industry, provide fuel for sustainable biomass energy projects, and create new jobs. It would also benefit the recreational sector as the state intends to develop access to the new state forest and encourage a broad range of multiple uses. These multiple uses, including annual timber harvests, would provide important economic opportunities to local communities, businesses, and residents.

It is important to keep in mind that SB 159 would establish a new state forest from state lands presently designated for forest management. The Susitna State Forest would be managed consistent with the management intent under the current Susitna Matanuska and the Southeast Susitna Area Plans. Alaska's Forest Resources Practices Act would apply to management activities on the forest and is designed to protect both fish habitat and water quality.

If established, the Susitna State Forest would be the fourth state forest in Alaska. RDC supports SB 159 and believes the proposed state forest will be of much benefit to the local economy – creating and sustaining much needed jobs in the forest products industry while providing many other opportunities. We urge the committee to pass SB 159.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Carl Portman".

Carl Portman
Deputy Director

Cc: Senator Linda Menard
Chris Maisch, State Forester

DENALI LOG & LUMBER

PO Box 212
Milepost 100 Parks Highway
Talkeetna, AK 99676

Phone: 907-355-5833
Fax: 907-733-5833
Email: denalinorthwest@yahoo.com

April 3, 2012

Honorable Linda Menard
State Capital Room 9
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Senate Bill 159, Proposed Susitna State Forest

Dear Senator Menard,

I would like to express my complete support for Senate Bill 159 creating the Susitna State Forest and to thank you for taking the initiative to ensure the future of professional forest management in the Susitna valley.

Denali Log & Lumber (DLL) is a locally owned and operated sawmill and firewood company located in the Talkeetna-Sunshine area near the junction of the Parks Highway and the Talkeetna Spur Road. DLL produces value-added wood products, such as spruce siding, cabin logs, beams, dimension lumber and split birch firewood, from local timber resources and sells these products to local residents. Since starting business in 2007, many of my customers have stated how happy they are to be able to obtain products locally that are made from local resources rather than imported from the lower 48 or Canada and sold by a chain store.

The potential for growth is significant but hampered by the lack of a consistent and reliable timber resource base. Being able to secure a stable, secure timber supply of several years duration would enable DLL and other wood products manufactures to more effectively plan for business expansion, hiring and financing. Numerous other benefits accrue to the public through active forest management. These include improved forest health, improved recreation and fire-fighting access, improved ability to manage future timber resources and improved wildlife habitat. Having state lands in the Susitna valley actively and professionally managed as a state forest will result in these and other benefits.

In addition to the establishment of the Susitna State Forest I urge the legislature to increase funding of the Division of Forestry so as to allow the Division to fully carry out its mandates statewide.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments and urge the legislature to pass this bill this year.

Mark Stahl, Owner

Alaska Chapter SCI
PO Box 770511
Eagle River, AK 99577
(907) 980-9018



February 9, 2012

The Honorable Linda Menard
Alaska State Senate
120 4th St. Rm 9
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Menard:

The Alaska Chapter of SCI is in support of SB 159 and commends you for your foresight in introducing this necessary piece of legislation.

As you may or may not know, SCI Alaska Chapter is not only the leading hunter-conservationist organization in Alaska, but is also SCI's leading chapter throughout the SCI network which includes over 105 countries and 260 chapters. Our mission is to protect the freedom to hunt through political advocacy and action, support for sound, science based conservation and wildlife management, and through humanitarian services.

In reviewing SB 159 and the applicable statutory guidelines in Title 41, we may wish to suggest amendments as this bill works its way through the process. We have some concerns as to whether the simple set aside of lands into a state forest will bring about desired results.

Our first concern is that suitable habitat is maintained for wildlife upon which rests one of the primary impetuses for recreation in Alaska. This concern leads us to believe that the bill does not go far enough in sequestering the necessary habitat to sustain wildlife populations through the establishment of contiguous parcels of land.

Our other major concern involves management practices. Although some lands may not be suitable for the growth of marketable timber, we maintain that those lands are nonetheless important for this state forest designation. Most of Alaska's wildlife depends heavily upon successional plant life. 'Climax forests do not provide the same level of benefit as does new forest lands. Since we do not encourage the proliferation of fire any longer in this area due to a variety of concerns, it is important that harvest of climax forests be allowed to produce suitable habitat for wildlife.

We look forward to working with you on this legislation and thank you again for introducing it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Eddie Grasser', written in a cursive style.

Eddie Grasser
Director of Government Affairs

SCI's Top Gun Chapter

Summary of area plan and other agency public processes related to the proposed Susitna State Forest [4/9/12]

- 1985 Susitna Area Plan identified Forestry designated lands for consideration as legislatively designated areas (LDAs).
- State lands under consideration for a Susitna State Forest are addressed by two area plans: the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (2011), and the Southeast Susitna Area Plan (2008). These two plans supersede the 1985 Susitna Area Plan.
- The Commissioner of DNR adopted the Southeast Susitna Area Plan (SSAP) on April 28, 2008, following a year-long planning process that included two rounds of public meetings. This plan applies to about 255,000 acres of state land formerly managed by the 1982 Willow Sub-Basin Area Plan and the original 1985 Susitna Area Plan. The SSAP designates 74,855 acres of state land for Forestry. The Division of Forestry actively manages these lands in the Houston and Kashwitna areas for timber production.

A recurring theme during the following public processes was the idea of a Susitna State Forest.

- In 2009, DOF engaged in a revision process for the 1991 Susitna Forestry Guidelines (SFG). A citizens' advisory committee and an inter-agency planning team were established and several meetings held. In 2009, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough hosted a series of open houses to obtain public input on the use and management of state and borough lands in the Susitna and Matanuska valleys. Meetings were held in the following communities in 2009:

Glacier View	Tuesday, April 14, 1-4 pm Long Rifle Lodge, Mile 102 Glenn Highway
Sutton	Tuesday, April 14, 5-9 pm Sutton Public Library, Mile 0.1 Jonesville Road
Willow	Wednesday, April 15, 5-9 pm Willow Community Center, MP 70 Parks Hwy
Wasilla	Thursday, April 16, 5-9 pm Cottonwood Public Safety Building
Anchorage	Tuesday, April 21, 5-9 pm Atwood Building, 550 West 7 th Ave., Suite 240
Talkeetna	Wednesday, April 22, 5-9 pm Talkeetna Elem. School, 13798 E Veterans Way
Trapper Creek	Thursday, April 23, 5-9 pm Trapper Creek Elem. School, 6742 Petersville Road

- In 2009, DOF's planner mentioned the Susitna State Forest during his presentation to the Mat-Su Salmon Science and Conservation Symposium in Wasilla.

- During annual (2008-2011) Winter Trails User's meetings between timber operators and Willow area dog mushers, the concept of a state forest in the Susitna was discussed, with broad support for the idea expressed by those attending. Dog mushers enjoy the use of state lands and the associated improved access from logging activities.
- Following a two year planning process, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) adopted the Susitna Matanuska Area Plan (SMAP) on August 11, 2011, with a date of issuance of August 17th. The SMAP applies to nine million acres of state land formerly managed under the Susitna Area Plan. About 700,000 acres of these state lands are classified Forestry. This area plan recommends establishment of a legislatively designated State Forest for those lands designated or co-designated Forestry in the SMAP and the 2008 Southeast Susitna Area Plan. Public input received at a series of 9 community meetings (with 110 attendees) held throughout the planning area and during a three and a half month public review (February – June 2011) of the draft SMAP supported the concept of a Susitna State Forest.
- DOF coordinated the public scoping efforts for the SFG with DMLW's area plan scoping and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's land use planning. During April of 2009, six joint open houses were held in communities in the Mat-Su area, and one in Anchorage. An open house planned for Skwentna in late March was cancelled due to an ash fall in the area from the volcanic eruption of Mt. Redoubt. Approximately 88 people attended the public meetings, and DOF received 22 written scoping comments through the end of July. Many of the written comments supported maintaining or strengthening the Susitna Forestry Guidelines as they are presently written, and keeping its original purpose statement intact. The public comments were generally supportive of forestry. The issues most frequently mentioned were regeneration, timber road access after harvesting, harvest design, riparian standards, and herbicides. Other public outreach efforts that occurred during this period included briefings with the Alaska Outdoor Council, Friends of the Mat-Su, and WACO Trail's Committee.
- The Mat-Su Area Forester reported on the interest in the Susitna State Forest to the Board of Forestry during their August 30-31, 2011 meeting.

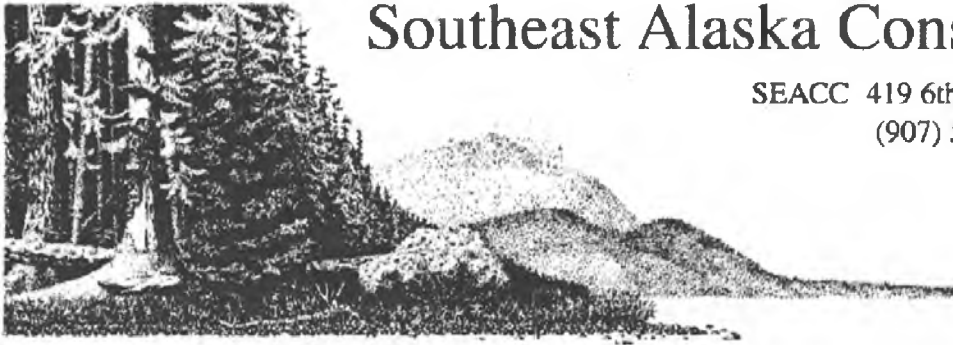
Senator Menard, after introducing SB-159, organized a Town Hall meeting and asked the Division of Forestry to provide technical presentations to other groups:

- Mat-Su Borough Assembly Meeting, February 22, 2012: Dean Brown, Deputy State Forester, and Ken Bullman, Mat-Su Area Forester, addressed the Assembly on SB-159.
- Talkeetna Community Council Meeting, March 6, 2012: Presentation by Ken Bullman, Mat-Su Area Forester, addressed the Assembly on SB-159.
- Houston City Council, March 8, 2012: Presentation by Rick Jandreau, Division of Forestry. Council adopted a Resolution of Support for SB-159.

- Town Hall Meeting in Wasilla, March 10, 2012: Rick Jandreau, Acting Forest Resources Program Manager for the Division of Forestry, addressed the Assembly on SB-159.
- Mat-Su Borough Assembly Meeting, March 27, 2012: Discussed SB-159
- Alaska Board of Forestry Meeting, March 20-21, 2012 in Juneau. Update by Chris Maisch, State Forester, on proposed Susitna State Forest (SB-159).

Newspaper articles and radio stories

- January 7, 2012, Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman: "Senator pushes for state forest designation"
- January 16, 2012, Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman: "State, local lawmakers return this week" – mentions Senator Menard's legislation to create a state forest in the Susitna Valley.
- February 27, 2012, KTNA Radio reported on Mat-Su Area Forester Ken Bullman's presentation to Council on proposed Susitna State Forest
- March 10, 2012, Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman: "Town hall meeting covers broad array of concerns" – including proposed Susitna State Forest.
- April 3, 2012, KTNA Radio: "Susitna State Forest Must Meet Management Guidelines, Council Says"



Southeast Alaska Conservation Council

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Statement of Buck Lindekugel, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council Before the Alaska House Community & Regional Affairs Committee

Regarding CSSB 159, An Act Establishing the Susitna State Forest
April 12, 2012

On behalf of our members, we wish to voice our surprise, disappointment, and dismay with Section 2 of SB 159. When introduced in January, this bill only proposed to establish the Susitna State Forest. Without warning, and with zero effort to inform affected communities, Alaska Native tribes, and the public, the Senate Resource Committee replaced SB 159 as introduced on March 21, 2012 with a bill that calls for a substantial change in the ownership and management of public lands in Southeast Alaska.

Shortly after this abrupt change the Senate passed the bill and transmitted it to the House. The House Community & Regional Affairs Committee is the first committee in the Alaska House to consider this bill. We call on members of this committee to reject SB 159 as amended and insist on a fair and full public discussion of this controversial matter before taking any action on this bill. Rushing such a fundamental and controversial change through the legislative process in the last moments of the session without informed public debate undermines the democratic process.

The “intent” language contained in Section 2 gives the Governor the cover to push a worn “timber-first” agenda – an agenda with little support within Southeast Alaska. Community leaders from across the political spectrum are actively working towards a different vision of the future for Southeast Alaska than that envisioned for the Tongass in SB 159.

The Forest Service calls their part of this vision a transition plan, an approach to forest management that provides both jobs-in-the-woods and conserves the region’s natural resource base.¹ Our incredible salmon forest supports the sustainable nearly \$1 billion dollar fishing industry, which employs nearly 10 times the number of workers as timber.² Our fish, wildlife, and incredible outdoor recreation opportunities support over a billion dollar in direct, indirect, and induced visitor spending in Southeast Alaska, and provides over 21 percent of the full and part time jobs in Southeast Alaska.³ The unglamorous but critical foundation of the region’s economy is customary and traditional hunting, fishing and gathering; salmon is the primary

¹ The strong economic potential of this approach to forest management is analyzed in an expert research analysis prepared for The Wilderness Society by resource economist Evan Hjerpe, Ph.D. This report is available at <http://wilderness.org/content/seeing-the-tongass-for-the-trees>.

² The report and an accompanying fact sheet can be found at <http://www.tu.org/conservation/alaska/tongass>

³ McDowell Group, *Economic Impact of Alaska’s Visitor Industry*, Table 9 at p. 20 (March 2010). This report is available at --http://www.dced.state.ak.us/ded/dev/pub/Visitor_Industry_Impacts_3_30.pdf.

source of food for rural Southeast Alaskans. We acknowledge the difficult times that so many of our small communities are facing, but logging watersheds that function as their key food-baskets make it even more difficult for them.

How the Tongass National Forest is managed means a great deal to the people who live in Southeast Alaska and depend upon its incredible resources for a broad variety of traditional, recreational, and commercial values. SEACC is working with a host of partners to build a diverse, stable, and sustainable economy in the region – a future that ensures that our watersheds, community hunting and fishing areas, Native cultural sites, and our tourism, recreation, and commercial fishing industries stay intact for future generations to enjoy and develops reliable and renewable energy resources to address our long-term needs.

We respectfully request the committee to table this measure or amend it to strike Section 2 and the second clause from the bill's title.

Statement for the April 10, 2012 House Community and Regional Affairs Committee Hearing in Juneau on SB 159.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation. I am John Sandor, 3311 Foster Avenue in Juneau, Alaska with a brief statement in support of SB 159.

I served in the U.S. Army during 1945-1946 of World War II, and later earned a Bachelor's Degree in Forest Management and a Master's Degree in Public Administration.

I first came to Alaska in March, 1953 to survey the forests of Southeast Alaska that year. I subsequently served in various forestry assignments throughout the U. S. and served as Regional Forester for the Alaska Region of the Forest Service from 1976 until retirement from the Forest Service in 1984.

During Governor Walter Hickel's 1990-1994 term of office, I also served as Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation.

I support Senate Bill 159 which will designate over 760,000 acres of state land as the Susitna State Forest in South Central Alaska. State Forest designation helps assure the professional management of Alaska's forest lands for the sustainable benefit of present and future generations of Alaskans.

I also support the SB 159 provisions which urges the Governor to acquire additional forest land currently in the Tongass National Forest. This provision will enable the State of Alaska to manage a State Forest in Southeast Alaska. Thank you.


John A. Sandor
Certified Forester

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS



Representative Cathy Muñoz, Chair

State Capitol Building, Room 403

Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

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Rep.Cathy.Muñoz@legis.state.ak.us

Rep. Alan Austerman, Rep. Sharon Cissna, Rep. Alan Dick, Rep. Neal Foster
Rep. Berta Gardner, Rep. Dan Saddler

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 12, 2012

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS SB 159

1. DNR FORESTRY STATE OFFICE Q & A w/Tanana & Haines State Forest Mngt Plans
2. Organized Village of Kake letter



MEMORANDUM
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

State of Alaska
FORESTRY STATE OFFICE

TO: Representative Cathy Munoz
Chair CRA

DATE: April 11, 2012

FILE NO:

FROM: John "Chris" Maisch
State Forester

TELEPHONE NO.: 590-3190

SUBJECT: Follow-Up CSSB-159 Access
Questions

During yesterday's hearing (4/10/12) there were several questions and concerns expressed over the topic of access and how a state forest designation would treat this topic.

One of the strong points of the state forest system is the development of a range of access options for management of the various resources in the state forest. The primary emphasis is on forest management, but other multiple uses are also encouraged and facilitated by the access development for the timber management program. As an example in the Tanana Valley State Forest a range of all-season and winter-only roads have been constructed over time. These roads are frequently built by purchasers of timber sales in the forest and are part of the contractual requirements of the timber sale contract. The state identifies center lines and major crossing structures at streams, along with basic design criteria and adjusts the timber sale base value rates for the appraised value of these infrastructure improvements. A quote from the 2002 Haines State Forest Management Plan illustrates this point:

"The primary source of maintenance of state-owned timber harvest access roads, including bridge maintenance and replacement, is through timber sale contracts." (Plus timber sales often pay for initial road construction, too).

These practices reinforce the zero fiscal note that is associated with this legislation; access is primarily developed by the commercial timber sale program with occasional investment of other previously appropriated DOF funds on key infrastructure needs.

There was also concern expressed about traditional means of access and ensuring that current users, including in-holders of private lands, will continue to enjoy the same level and type of access. When a state forest is approved via legislation, a forest management plan must be completed within three years of the affective date (AS 41.17.230). One of the key topics addressed by the plan is access and this is developed in conjunction with the public and key interest groups associated with the forest and its current uses. Again, a quote from the Haines plan underscores this point:

"Traditional means of access as well as access to traditional use areas will be maintained in the State Forest. The statute establishing the State Forest (AS 41.15.300) includes as a primary purpose the "continuation of other beneficial uses including traditional uses and other recreational activities" "

Another way the DOF ensures that there are multiple avenues for participation in the management of a state forest is by establishing a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in the forest management planning process. With the level of interest in the access topic, I would envision a seat on the CAC for the Susitna State Forest being designated for access and for in-holding properties. This will help keep the lines of communication open between the Division and various users of the forest. The CAC for the Tanana Valley State Forest (TVSF) provides excellent advice to managers and serves as a forum for discussing and helping resolve issues of concern to the community.

I'm confident that the concerns expressed on access can be addressed via the formulation of the forest management plan for the Susitna State Forest and implementation of a Citizens Advisory Committee. In the TVSF we have constructed approximately 500 miles of all-season and winter-only roads and have a range of motorized and other uses of the road system. Further more, the management of access in our current system of state forests is working well. This demonstrates our agency's supportive management philosophy in regard to access.

"Timber harvest in the Tanana Valley State Forest creates timber roads that can provide access to the forest for people using all different modes of transportation, including dogsled, foot, horses, skis, ATVs, and snow machines."

I've attached excerpts from both the 2002 Haines State Forest and the 2001 Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plans with sections highlighted where access issues are discussed. You will see that the topic is treated extensively and with the goal of developing additional access over time, while accommodating the range of uses the public finds of value in its state forest system.

Attachments:

Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan: 2001 Update, Chapters 1 and 2
Haines State Forest Management Plan, 2002, Chapter 2

From Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan: 2001 Update

http://forestry.alaska.gov/management/tvsf_final_plan.htm

Chapter 1, page 2:

In addition, AS 38.04.200 states that DNR "may not manage state land, water, or land and water so that a traditional means of access for traditional outdoor activities is restricted for the purpose of protecting aesthetic values [...] unless the restriction or prohibition is"

- "for an area of land, water, or land and water that encompasses 640 contiguous acres or less;"
- "temporary in nature and effective cumulatively less than eight months in a three-year period;"
- "for the protection of public safety and public or private property;"
- "for the development of natural resources and a reasonable alternative for the traditional means of access across the land, water, or land and water for traditional outdoor activities on other land, water, or land and water is available and approved by the commissioner; or"
- "authorized by an act of the legislature."

Chapter 1, page 7:

- **Forest Land Use Plans (FLUPs).** The DNR Division of Forestry must prepare a FLUP for each timber sale greater than 10 acres, except for salvage harvests on land that is cleared for non-forest use (AS 38.05.112). A FLUP describes the harvest methods, access, reforestation plan, and multiple use provisions for the proposed sale. Each FLUP must consider the same list of uses required for the Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan ((AS 38.05.112(c)); see "Establishment and Purpose of the Tanana Valley State Forest," above). Draft FLUPs are published for public, industry, and agency review prior to adoption.

Chapter 2, page 14:

FISH AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

I. GOALS

C. Ensure Access to Public Lands and Waters

Ensure access to public lands and waters where appropriate to promote or enhance responsible public use and enjoyment of fish and wildlife resources. Access improvements should be designed to match the public use objectives for the area under consideration. See also guidelines in the Public Access section of Chapter 2.

Chapter 2, page 25-27:

PUBLIC ACCESS

I. GOALS

Maintain, enhance, or provide adequate access to publicly-owned land and resources.

B. Retain Access

The state will improve or maintain public access to the Tanana Valley State Forest by retaining access sites and corridors in public ownership, reserving rights of access when state land is leased adjacent to the State Forest, acquiring access, or identifying RS 2477 rights-of-way. Generally, section line easements should not be vacated on land within or adjacent to the State Forest unless reasonable alternative access can be established. Within the State Forest, DNR will reserve public access across areas leased for private use.

C. Management of 17(b) Easements

17(b) easements are public easements through Native Corporation land. The Bureau of Land Management manages 17(b) easements. Generally, DNR will not accept management of 17(b) easements unless it already actively manages a portion of the trail or easement, or unless state management will best protect public access to state lands. The DNR Division of Mining, Land and Water manages RS 2477 routes where they coincide with 17(b) easements.

D. Access for Development

When an access route is constructed for resource development, existing public access will not be displaced or rendered unusable by new construction. Various uses of resource development roads shall not restrict the purpose for which the roads were constructed.

E. Public Access Rights

Where feasible and within the limits of available funding, full public rights of access should be provided when roads are constructed by state or local governments for purposes other than forest operations. Perpetual exclusive easements should be acquired and recorded when the state acquires access rights across property in other ownerships adjacent to the State Forest.

F. Coordination with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF)

Access needs, such as right-of-way widths or road locations, should be coordinated with DOT/PF.

G. Limiting Access

Access to land within the State Forest may be curtailed at certain times to protect public safety, allow special uses, and prevent harm to the environment. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, timber harvest operations, and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails. Existing statutes address restrictions of easements and rights-of-way use (AS 38.04.058), and restrictions of traditional means of access (AS 38.04.200). These and subsequent statutes and regulations must be considered when contemplating use restrictions.

H. Access Along and Across the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (TAPS)

On state land, access is allowed across and along the TAPS under the following conditions:

1. Crossing on foot or by vehicles of less than 1,500 lbs. gross vehicle weight (GVW) is allowed without a permit.

2. Crossing by vehicles, pickups, four-wheel-drive vehicles, and all-terrain-vehicles over 1,500 lbs GVW requires a permit except at designated vehicle crossings.
3. The public may not travel on the TAPS right-of-way parallel to the pipeline except by permit from the DNR State Pipeline Coordinator's Office.

I. Pipeline Access Roads

DNR should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to open or move barrier gates temporarily or permanently on certain access roads that cross state land between the Richardson and Elliot Highways and the pipeline right-of-way. Such an arrangement would allow the public more access to state land along service roads and within the State Forest.

J. Pipeline Crossings

DNR should work with Alyeska Pipeline Service Company to identify options to develop new pipeline crossings. Future pipelines (such as the Trans-Alaska Gas Line) should provide more places for public crossings to state land for hunting, fishing, recreation, timber harvest, settlement, and other uses or provide a mechanism to improve or develop future public crossings as the need arises.

Chapter 2, page 63:

TOURISM

Definition: Tourism markets Alaska's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources. The marketable resources on which tourism depends include scenic viewsheds, wilderness, forests, wildlife, lakes, and rivers, along with developed areas, which possess cultural, economic, and/or historical significance. The difference between recreation and tourism is that tourism is a commercial activity, while recreation is a leisure activity.

The Tanana Valley State Forest will be managed for multiple use, consistent with the purpose of the establishment of the State Forest (AS 41.17.200). The State Forest is one component of the mosaic of public land in the Tanana Valley that includes state and federal park land, as well as general state land that has been designated for recreation. The State Forest will be retained in state ownership and managed to allow a range of development activities to occur, including tourism operations.

Tourism activities in the State Forest are generally concentrated along rivers, roads, and trails. The tourism industry is an economic use of the Tanana Valley State Forest. The following list describes some of the resources in the Tanana Valley State Forest that benefit tourism.

- A. The Tanana Valley's forests provide natural settings for visitors engaged in activities that range from sightseeing to canoeing to wilderness camping and hiking.
- B. Timber harvest in the Tanana Valley State Forest creates timber roads that can provide access to the forest for people using all different modes of transportation, including dogsled, foot, horses, skis, ATVs, and snowmachines.
- C. The Tanana Valley State Forest Management Plan allows for the development of roads, boat launches, pull-outs, campgrounds, cabins, and trails that would provide visitors with opportunities to access recreational and scenic sites. The plan also encourages the development of facilities that provide information about areas of cultural, economic, and/or historical significance, or about forest history and ecology (such as visitor centers and interpretive sites).

Chapter 2, page 66:

TRAILS

I. GOALS

A. Public Use Opportunities

Ensure continued opportunities for public use of important recreation, public access, and historic trails of regional and statewide significance.

B. Local Trails

Assist in establishing local trail systems that provide access to community recreation areas.

C. Trail Corridors

Protect or establish trail corridors to meet projected future use requirements and protect current use.

Chapter 2, page 67:

E. Conversion of Roads into Trails

A forest access road may be converted to a trail after its use as a road has terminated. The nature of the road may require that it be put-to-bed, thus the new "trail" may have water bars, removed culverts, grass seeding, or other measures to prevent erosion which other trails may not have. Roads will be converted into trails only after consideration in the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and Forest Land Use Plans. Any anticipated conversions should consider the Corps of Engineers' silvicultural exemption during the process.

Chapter 2, page 70:

TRANSPORTATION

The Division of Forestry plans to bring the entire timberland base of the State Forest under active resource management. At current harvest levels it will take several rotations before all areas of the forest are brought under active management. Current rotation lengths vary from 80 years in the hardwoods to 120 years in the softwoods.

As all areas of the forest are brought into active management the transportation system will be expanded by using a variety of road systems. At some point in the future, all areas will have access via an all season or winter road system. Portions of the road system will be inactive or "put to bed" for long periods of time. Other portions will be maintained as primary access routes into the forest. Planning and route selection for this system will be incremental and will occur as timber sales or other resource management activities occur in different geographic regions of the forest. This transportation system will be integrated and coordinated with other major land-owners, private and public, to ensure an efficient and logical transportation system is developed.

I. GOALS

Develop a transportation system to implement this plan and integrate it with other transportation needs in the Tanana Basin.

A. Minimize Costs

Develop a transportation system that has the lowest possible long-range cost, including construction, operations, and maintenance. Avoid unnecessary duplication of transportation facilities.

B. Minimize Adverse Impacts

Develop a transportation system with minimal adverse impact on the environment, aesthetic and cultural features, and other users.

C. Promote Efficiency

Develop a transportation system through a process of efficient route planning and with consideration of the full range of access needs, such as access to approved developments, commercial timber, recreation, and for forest protection.

D. Ensure Public Safety

Develop a transportation system with a high standard of public safety.

E. Minimize Access Restrictions

Do not unduly restrict access to TVSF land and resources.

II. MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES

A. Identification of Potential Transportation Routes

Rivers and terrain influence the type of access that exists, and the type of access that will be constructed in the State Forest. Much of the State Forest is accessible only by winter road due to the presence of wetlands and rivers. Descriptions of anticipated access for each management unit is found in Chapter 3. Due to changing economic conditions or the construction of roads for non-timber projects, access may change from what is described in Chapter 3.

The Tanana Basin Area Plan provides general recommendations for transportation routes necessary to support the land use policies in that plan, including some routes that cross the Tanana Valley State Forest. However, more detailed route alignment and feasibility analysis must be completed before the routes can be considered final.

To the extent feasible and prudent, DNR will avoid actions incompatible with the eventual construction of any potential transportation routes within the Tanana Valley State Forest that were identified in the Tanana Basin Area Plan until final decisions are made on the feasibility of these routes. The transportation routes that could potentially pass through the State Forest are the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline, the Alaska Railroad Extension, the Prince William Sound - Upper Tanana Railroad Corridor, Western Access Railroad Corridor, and Nenana-Totchaket Area Access route. Descriptions of these routes are given in the Tanana Basin Area Plan.

B. Access Plans for Resource Development Projects

Access needs for forest management are described in Chapter 3 for each management unit, and are summarized in Table 12. However, access plans may change over time because of factors like access development for non-timber resources (e.g., minerals and oil and gas). Incremental development of forest roads is anticipated to occur throughout the State Forest. The rate will depend on demand for forest products and need for forest protection and other multiple use activities. Non-timber development projects may not be anticipated in this plan, but may be initiated in any part of the State Forest. Prior to the initiation of a resource development project, DNR will identify appropriate means of access and responsibilities for design, construction and maintenance of any proposed transportation facilities. Access plans for timber operations will be proposed to the public and other agencies through the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales and Forest Land Use Plans. Access plans for other development activities will be coordinated through the applicable permitting processes.

Chapter 2, page 74:

Forest roads should remain open if they access substantial timber or other public resources. When known, decisions regarding permanent road closure and continued maintenance will be reviewed by agencies and the public in the Five Year Schedule of Timber Sales planning process as detailed in Chapter 4, and in the Forest Land Use Plans for specific timber sales.

From 2002 Haines State Forest Management Plan

Online at <http://forestry.alaska.gov/management/hainesplan.htm>

[Chapter 2, pages 23-24]

Management Guidelines

1. Public Access

Access to the State Forest shall be provided to the public, but may be limited or curtailed at certain times to protect public safety, allow special uses, and prevent harm to the environment. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, timber harvest operations, and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails. Statutes address restrictions of easement and right-of-way use (AS 38.04.058) and restrictions of traditional means of access (AS 38.04.200). These and subsequent statutes and regulations must be considered when contemplating use restrictions.

Use levels on public access routes within the State Forest may vary. Consideration should be given to use/development of facilities if needed and if funding is available.

2. Trails

The need for trail maintenance or upgrades and/or the development of new trail routes will be evaluated in the Five-Year Forest Management Schedule. The Schedule will identify the location and type of improvement and will provide budget details. The funding of trail maintenance or new trail facilities depends on the availability of funding for construction and maintenance. Trail improvements, often associated with other types of recreational facilities like public use cabins, are recommended in many of the units within the Forest.

A forest access road may be converted to a trail after its use as a road has terminated. The nature of the road may require that it be put-to-bed. Thus, the new "trail" may have water bars, removed culverts, grass seeding, or other measures to prevent erosion which other trails may not have. These "trails" can be reverted to the original intended use as required by the Division of Forestry. Roads will be converted to trails only after consideration in the Five-Year Forest Management Schedule and Forest Land Use Plans.

The rerouting of trails for a short distance may be permitted to minimize land use conflicts or to facilitate use of a trail if alternate routes provide opportunities similar to the original route. If trails are rerouted, provision should be made for construction of new trail segments if warranted by type of use. Rerouting of trails will be addressed in the Five-Year Forest Management Schedule and Forest Land Use Plan processes.

[Chapter 2, page 25]

E. Construction of roads for access to privately-owned land, state land, federal land, municipal land, or valid mining claims, is allowed to assure reasonable, timely, and economically feasible access.

[Chapter 2, page 26]

6. Private Recreation Facilities and Uses

Private facilities or uses for private profit making, or private not-for-profit recreation operations, including facilities and uses associated with tourism, may be authorized if the following conditions are met:

- Significant public access or recreational opportunities will not be lost or blocked by the facility or operation, or reasonable alternative access to areas that otherwise would be blocked can be provided;

[Chapter 2, pages 26-27]

8. Traditional Uses and Modes of Transportation

Traditional means of access as well as access to traditional use areas will be maintained in the State Forest. The statute establishing the State Forest (AS 41.15.300) includes as a primary purpose the "continuation of other beneficial uses including traditional uses and other recreational activities". The definition of and protection for traditional uses is further established in AS 38.04.200. This section of statute, which is applicable to the State Forest in addition to general state lands, states that DNR may not manage state lands or waters so that a traditional means of access for traditional outdoor activities is to be restricted for the purpose of protecting aesthetic values, except under certain limited conditions. Traditional means of access means those types of transportation for which a popular pattern of use are developed. Traditional outdoor activities includes those types of activities that people use for sport, subsistence, personal enjoyment, or that have been historically conducted as part of an individual, family, or community life pattern. These management restrictions protect personal use, either motorized or non-motorized. They do not extend to commercial uses of any kind. Accordingly, once patterns of 'popular use' have been established within the State Forest, DNR cannot prohibit these uses if the use is of a personal (non-commercial) type. Most areas of the State Forest have at least some established popular use patterns for recreation, and most of these areas are used by both forms of transportation.

[Chapter 2, pages 33-37]

TRANSPORTATION

Goals

1. Manage the Haines Highway Corridor for transportation and scenic values. Timber harvest activities will be limited to small commercial and personal use sales. (See Forest Resources section.)
2. Expand the existing road system to provide safe and economical access for timber harvest, as well as mining, public recreation, fire protection and other resource management activities within the State Forest.

3. Design, construct, and maintain all roads with consideration for the environmental values of the Haines State Forest.

4. Maintain state-owned timber access roads and bridges for public access subject to available funding, safety concerns and environmental conditions.

Management Guidelines

1. Road Construction (Coastal Region Forestry Road Standards)

A. General Conditions

(1) State inspectors will be present on site during most road construction activities, especially in environmentally sensitive areas.

(2) Road width: Roads shall be 20 feet, including ditch and 35 feet where designated turnouts are built.

(3) Surfacing width: 14-16 feet.

(4) Surfacing: the minimum necessary to allow log trucking without surface deformation.

(5) Turnouts: will be intervisible, with a surfaced length of 50 feet at full width.

(6) Grade: the maximum favorable grade is 20 percent. The maximum adverse grade is 10 percent unless otherwise designated.

(7) Degree of curvature: the absolute maximum permitted is 100 degrees. The ordinary designed maximum shall be 90 degrees.

B. Clearing and Grubbing

(1) The clearing boundary limits will be marked with pink ribbon on both sides except where the road passes through harvest units.

(2) Snags and trees leaning heavily over the roadway that are outside the clearing limits shall be felled. Snags will be felled in conjunction with cutting the regular right-of-way.

(3) All stumps, any portion of which falls within the cut slopes, shall be removed.

(4) All stumps that extend within three feet of the finished sub-grade or road

shoulders shall be removed.

(5) No debris resulting from the clearing and grubbing operation shall be permitted to remain under any portion of the embankment within the cleared right-of-way.

(6) Debris will not be piled or pushed against existing trees.

C. Grading

(1) The roads shall be constructed according to the state's horizontal and vertical control profiles.

(2) All material within the control lines shall be removed with excess excavation used to widen the embankments. End haul may be required.

(3) All fills six feet deep and over shall be widened two feet for each six feet of centerline depth to a maximum width of 36 feet. Embankment slopes shall not be steeper than 1-1/4:1 for common and 1:1 for rock. Fills shall be compacted in two-foot layers.

(4) Cut slopes shall be constructed as designated on slope stakes and reference markers. Generally these slopes will be 3/4:1 below 70 percent, 1/2:1 above 70 percent, and vertical in rock.

D. Drainage Structures

(1) Culverts will be galvanized corrugated metal pipe (not aluminum), minimum 18" diameter or the equivalent in plastic culverts.

(2) Culverts will be buried at least 20 percent of the diameter or a minimum of 12", whichever is greater, and will project three feet beyond the fill on the inlet and outlet.

(3) Culverts will be laid at a slope of two to six percent unless specified otherwise. Culverts will be placed at the natural stream gradient on anadromous fish streams. Bottomless crossing structures will be employed on anadromous fish streams where appropriate. All stream crossings that contain fish habitat must be approved and permitted by ADF&G.

(4) All bridges shall be designed or approved by the regional engineer. All bridges that do not meet minimum load carrying specifications will be repaired, replaced, or posted for reduced load minimums.

E. Location

(1) Roads constructed within the State Forest boundary for the purpose of

accessing private ownership, mineral claim sites, material lease sites, etc., will be to the location and quality specifications as designated by the Division of Forestry on a case-by-case basis.

(2) Reasonable, timely and economically feasible access will be cooperatively determined with all parties concerned.

(3) No land classification will prohibit construction of roads for access purposes.

2. Road Design

A. Roads will be designed to maximize resource access while minimizing adverse environmental impact.

B. Design for roads through critical fisheries and wildlife areas should be done in consultation with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. These areas may include moose and goat winter concentration areas, eagle nesting trees, bear denning areas, and salmon spawning and rearing habitat.

3. Road Maintenance

A. As with construction, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is responsible for the repair and maintenance of all state highways.

B. Timber harvest access roads shall be maintained under the following guidelines:

(1) Primary haul roads for the most part are to be maintained and left open for public access. Closure shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. This maintenance shall not include winter snow removal.

(2) Secondary haul roads shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Those not designated to be maintained shall be properly "put-to-bed".

(3) Spur roads, with very few exceptions, will be properly "put-to-bed".

(4) If maintenance funds are not available, roads that may adversely impact anadromous fish habitat will be "put-to-bed".

C. For purposes herein, properly "put-to-bed" may include, but is not necessarily limited to: removal of bridges or culverts, construction of water bars to control run-off, and grass seeding where necessary to reduce erosion potential.

D. The primary source of maintenance of state-owned timber harvest access roads, including bridge maintenance and replacement, is through timber sale contracts.

E. The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities shall conduct periodic

inspections on all state-maintained bridges.

F. Treatment of encroaching roadside brush may be by hand, or by mechanical means in order to maintain safety standards and visibility.

4. Protection of Cultural Resources

Known historic and archaeological sites should be avoided during construction of transportation facilities unless no other feasible alternative exists.

5. Curtailing Public Access

Access to public lands may be curtailed at certain times to protect public safety, to allow special uses, and to prevent harm to the environment. Examples of conditions that may justify limiting public access are fire management, curtailment of maintenance funds, timber harvest operations, control of hunting pressure, and high soil moisture content when traffic may cause extensive damage to roads and trails.

6. Right-of-Way Across Native Allotments

Right-of-way access needs across Native allotments should be coordinated with the Southeast Agency of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Juneau or Tlingit & Haida Central Council whichever is the agency responsible for overseeing the Native Allotments in the area.

7. Other Guidelines Affecting Transportation

A number of other guidelines may affect transportation. For details of those guidelines, see the following sections of this chapter:

- Fish and Wildlife
- Forest Resources
- Recreation



Organized Village of Kake

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(Federally Recognized Tribal Government serving the Kake, Alaska area)



April 11, 2012

Albert Kookesh, Senator
Alaska State Senate
State Capital, RM 11
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: Opposition to SB 159 & HB 156.

Dear Senator Kookesh:

The Organized Village of Kake (OVK), a federally recognized Indian Tribe, is organized pursuant to the authority of the Federal Indian Reorganization Acts (hereinafter IRA) of 1934 & 1936 with the IRA Council as the duly elected governing body formed under its *Constitution and By-laws* to execute agreements and contracts with the United States to benefit its members. OVK is opposed to SB 159, An Act Establishing the Susitna State Forest Urging the Governor to Acquire Forest Land that is in the Tongass National Forest, as well as a similar bill in the House, HB 156.

As the elected representatives of the tribal citizens of Kake, OVK is the steward of the Air, Land, Water, Tlingit Culture, Traditional Values and History for its membership. As indigenous people of Southeast Alaska who have called the Tongass National Forest home since time immemorial, the management of our land has increasingly been stripped from us. Current resource management resides with United States Forest Service (USFS). OVK has a long standing relationship with the USFS. As a Tribal Government we are extremely vested in the current and future resource management and distribution of our lands. The State of Alaska continues to resist all efforts to work in a government to government relationship with the Tribes. This proposed sale would further remove Tribes from having a voice in the best interest of our land.

OVK opposes SB 159 and further requests the Senate require the Governor to mandate his commissioners to establish mechanisms for developing government to government relationships processes. In the interim of developing these requested procedures, we propose that the Governor direct his commissioners to ensure Tribal input on any policy affecting our land, air, and sea. .

SB159 directly threatens our customary and traditional use by laying the ground work for future resource disruption of the Tongass National Forest. Until the State of Alaska establishes a government to government relationship that seeks to work with our federally recognized Tribes, particularly on land management, OVK will not support this bill.

Sincerely,

Casimero A. Aceveda Jr.
OVK President