

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

1994

Source

SCS CSHJR 55(RES)

Legislative
Resolve No.

50



Relating to the importance to the economy of Southeast Alaska of continued timber harvests on the Tongass National Forest.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) and the Tongass Land Management Plan define multiple use objectives for the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, according to the Multiple Use Sustained Yield Act of 1960, national forest land is to be managed for a sustainable yield of various resources including water, fish, wildlife, and timber; and

WHEREAS the Tongass Land Management Plan is currently undergoing revision to see how these goals are being met and to provide direction for meeting these goals in the future; and

WHEREAS regeneration on harvested land in the Tongass National Forest has demonstrated that second growth yields can reach the 23,000 board feet per acre necessary to sustain a harvest of 450,000,000 board feet per year as designated in the Tongass Land Management Plan; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, timber sales on the Tongass National Forest have been significantly reduced so that far less than 450,000,000 board feet are available; and

WHEREAS the economy of Southeast Alaska utilizes resources of the Tongass for commercial fisheries, recreation, tourism, mining, and timber harvest; and

WHEREAS the economy of Southeast Alaska is stable, has enabled the use of long-term bond financing for public service, and has attracted significant private capital investment; and

WHEREAS the timber industry of Southeast Alaska was developed based upon an expected annual harvest level of 450,000,000 board feet; and

WHEREAS Tongass National Forest timber resources accounted for about 2,500 of the annual average 3,600 private sector jobs directly generated by the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska in 1992, the last year for which accurate figures are available; and

WHEREAS the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska accounted for 24 percent of basic industry employment (including government), and 34 percent of all private basic industry employment, in 1992; and

WHEREAS workers in the forest products industry in Southeast Alaska, including loggers, road builders, stevedores, sawmill workers, and pulp mill workers earned approximately \$146,000,000 in wages and salaries during 1992; and

WHEREAS forest products industry employment in Southeast Alaska has declined sharply since 1990, marked by the loss of \$18,000,000 in payroll and more than 600 jobs, due to reduced timber harvests on the Tongass and the near completion of the first harvest on private land; and

WHEREAS the United States Congress in 1980 enacted the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which includes provisions designating 5,400,000 acres of the Tongass National Forest as part of the Wilderness Preservation System, and thus closed that land to timber harvest; and

WHEREAS an increase in the availability of timber for harvest on the Tongass National Forest could offset the lack of production of timber from private land and maintain the economic well-being of Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS a decline in the availability of timber to harvest on the Tongass National

Forest will continue to cause the loss of jobs in the timber industry in Southeast Alaska and will significantly impair the economic well-being of the area as many communities are totally or otherwise very dependent on the timber industry as the sole or one of the largest employers in the community; and

WHEREAS the United States Congress in 1990 enacted the Tongass Timber Reform Act, thus closing an additional 1,100,000 acres of land to timber harvest through wilderness designations and management practices; and

WHEREAS timber availability is critical to the health of the forest products industry in Alaska, and the availability of timber in the Tongass National Forest will likely determine the future of the forest products industry in Alaska; and

WHEREAS the United States Congress controls the level of timber harvesting in the Tongass in part through the budget process and by these land designations acts; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, manages the Tongass National Forest and determines the availability of timber for harvest on the land not closed to timber harvest;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States Congress to review the economic impact on the Southeast Alaska economy and the forest products industry of the wilderness designations imposed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980, and the wilderness designations and changes in management practices mandated by the Tongass Timber Reform Act of 1990; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States Congress to increase the amount of timber available for harvest in the Tongass National Forest; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States Congress to provide sufficient funding to the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, to facilitate offering for harvest the maximum amount of Tongass timber possible under current law while recognizing and protecting other resource values; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature requests the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, to manage the Tongass National Forest in order

to provide maximum opportunity for timber harvest under current law while recognizing and protecting other resource values.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable George Mitchell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska Delegation in Congress; and to Mr. Michael Espy, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Mr. Jack Ward Thomas, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service.