



January 27, 2010

Senator Lisa Murkowski
709 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: S 881

Dear Senator Murkowski:

After a discussion of S 881 at its January 25, 2010 meeting, Craig City Council has the following comments to offer on the legislation.

1. Native Future Sites

Section 3(b)3 of S 881 provides for a category of selections titled "Native Future Sites". These selections, at least nine of which are on or adjacent to Prince of Wales Island, are a patchwork of small parcels located at key points, passages, bays, beaches, estuaries, narrows, and other important geographic sites around Southeast Alaska. The effect of allowing such selections in S 881 is to alienate from the public domain some extraordinarily important and highly valuable sites, including those at Arena Cove, Tlevak Narrows, and Tonowek Narrows, Waterfall Bay, Port Refugio, Ridge Island, Jackson Island, Aston Island, and Cordova Bay. The transfer of these lands out of public ownership jeopardizes their use by the public.

2. Impacts to the Tongass Land Use Management Plan

Written testimony on S 881 provided to the US Senate by the Department of Agriculture, dated October 8, 2009 detail concerns about the affect that S 881 will have on the recently adopted Tongass Land Use Management Plan. The effects to the US Forest Service management, including management of the Forest Service Timber Program, are potentially very significant, and more importantly, are unknown at this point. The transfer of some unharvested timber lands out of Forest Service management could weaken the ability of the Forest Service to offer timber sales in other areas of the national forest. The elimination of these areas by S 881 could well lead to increased litigation from environmental groups and increase opportunities for the federal courts to slow or stop federal timber sales in the forest. The release of selection and overselection areas within the original ANCSA withdrawal areas may not constitute appropriate substitute conservation areas for lands from the standpoint of the courts.

Because of the interconnectedness of the conservation and timber harvest programs on the Tongass, and the impact one has upon the other, ANCSA selections outside the established withdrawal areas should not be permitted until such time as we know how changes to TLMP will affect the timber program and the area's saw mills. However, if S 881 permits such selections, one option that may mitigate the impact to TLMP from these

selections would be to require that timber harvest activities of S 881 Economic Development Lands comply with riparian buffer requirements, harvest unit size, and other typical Forest Service silviculture practices applied to logging units found on federal land.

Finally, we ask that your office send representatives to POW to take comments from island residents on the proposed legislation.

Thank you for hearing our concerns on S 881. The city stands ready to work with the Alaska Congressional delegation and representatives from Sealaska toward a resolution of Sealaska's land entitlement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "A. Millie Schoonover".

Mayor A. Millie Schoonover
City of Craig