



Alaska Forest Association

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sent via email May 2, 2025

United States House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC, 20515

Chairman Westerman, Vice Chairman Wittman and Members of the House Natural Resources Committee,

This letter is provided to indicate the Alaska Forest Association's (AFA's) support for the House Natural Resources Committee's Reconciliation Committee Print released on May 1, 2025.

The AFA is one of Alaska's oldest trade associations representing a variety of members in the forest products industry in Alaska.

The primary impediment to our industry's survival in Alaska is long-term timber supply and we are reliant on a federal agency landlord that has failed to deliver the required timber sale volume pursuant to the 2016 Forest Plan for the Tongass National Forest for years. The southeast AK industry requires 55 million board feet (MMBF) annually, of which 46 MMBF should be provided by the USFS. Last year the agency put up 3 MMBF in sales on the Tongass. The USFS controls 94% of the land in southeast Alaska. A once thriving industry, that provided thousands of jobs and hundreds of millions of dollars in investment to the state of AK, and supported funding for rural schools is being strangled.

The Reconciliation Bill you have released provides both the direction to the USFS to deliver the supply guaranteed in the 2016 Plan, and the opportunity for longer-term sales. This will allow our operators to invest in new equipment, enter longer-term contracts with existing and new customers, and expand their operations which in turn supports more local, rural jobs that pay a year-round living wage.

Alaska's forest products are the finest in the world! Our products are sent to a distributor in Texas who provides southern states with the "champagne of lumber", are the only source for the sound boards of grand and baby grand pianos made by Steinway in Pennsylvania, serve as the exterior finishes of homes in the Hamptons, provide cedar fencing across the United States, are the strongest and most flexible wood product used in Japan for railroad ties, and are used in military procurement application for space exploration and the national defense of our country. Our people are worth protecting. Our industry is worth preserving. Thank you for your leadership in recognizing the value of our industry, the broader forest products industry in the United States, and the need for supporting resource development across the country.

Please contact me directly with any questions at either tessa@akforest.org or 907-225-6114,

Sincerely,

Tessa Axelson
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Congressman Nick Begich