

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 12, 2011

Community Leaders withdraw from Tongass Futures Roundtable due to a lack of commitment to work toward consensus on any significant timber issues.

Six community leaders have resigned today from the Tongass Futures Roundtable. Elaine Price, City Administrator for Coffman Cove, Carol Rushmore, Economic Development Director for the City and Borough of Wrangell, Tim Rooney, Borough Manager for the City and Borough of Wrangell, Scott Hahn, City Manager for the City of Petersburg, Leo Luczak, Community Development Director for the City of Petersburg and Dennis Watson, community member and former Mayor of Craig have resigned due to the lack of commitment by the Roundtable to work toward finding a way to stabilize the timber industry and communities. The Tongass Futures Roundtable was established 5 years ago to bring stakeholders together to try to find common ground for land management in the Tongass National Forest. The idea was to bring communities, industry leaders and environmental groups to the table to reach consensus on non-controversial areas that could be used to support timber based jobs and stabilize a struggling timber industry, provide long-term economic sustainability for Southeast communities and villages, and identify key critical habitat areas for long-term environmental sustainability.

After 5 years, it is apparent the Tongass Futures Roundtable has failed at finding any resolution or agreement or even the agenda. The timber industry has continued to decline significantly, recently losing another mill and associated jobs, experiencing major reductions in the available timber supply, contributing to area population decline, and facing continued lawsuit delays. Any proposal submitted by the timber industry for consideration by the Roundtable has consistently been rejected for creating too much impact to yet another newly identified "critical" habitat area. Lobbying efforts by some environmental organizations in Washington D.C. have inaccurately portrayed activities of the Roundtable as consensus agreements and continue to urge the federal administration to abandon a timber sale program. While the Roundtable continues to address its own future, Ms. Price, Ms. Rushmore, Mr. Rooney, Mr, Hahn, Mr. Luczak and Mr. Watson will look to the Governor's newly established Timber Task Force for support for responsible resource development in SE Alaska.

Consensus at the Tongass Futures Roundtable does not work with so many members living outside of southeast Alaska, when organizations and individuals have an agenda of stopping any effort or proposal having to do with resource development, and when consensus requires a 100% agreement. These 6 community members would like to thank the efforts of some of the

staff of the Nature Conservancy Alaska office who worked diligently to try and work through the varying opinions of the members. However, in a letter published in the Juneau Empire on February 17, 2011, the Sierra Club's Roundtable representative Mark Rorick stated he would never agree on any consensus other than his own agenda and made it clear their agenda is to stop any resource development in Southeast. This position by a representative of the environmental community makes the Roundtable unworkable. Recent Roundtable agendas makes it evident the Roundtable has strayed from the one issue that brought all the original members together --- Timber. It was initially a difficult decision to resign for these members since the Tongass Futures Roundtable has been a beneficial forum to discuss issues with various stakeholders, and the hope that maybe this time the outcome would be different. However, the decision ultimately became quite easy when one considers the cost of talk has resulted in the further decline of the timber industry, the loss of more jobs SE Alaska cannot afford, and only supports the delay tactics of the environmental organizations that are not willing to allow multiple use of the Tongass National Forest on any level.

Contact:
Elaine Price
City of Coffman Cove
907-329-2233