

Southeast Conference

Resolution 16-11

A RESOLUTION OF THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE IN SUPPORT OF HR3650

WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service has abandoned its mission on the Tongass National Forest “To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations”, and

WHEREAS, in 1989 the United States Forest Service proclaimed the timberlands outside of the Congressional non-development set-asides could sustain an annual harvest level of 1,950 million board feet annually, without adverse impacts to fish, wildlife or recreation , and

WHEREAS, Tongass National Forest Conditions have not significantly changed since 1989, and

WHEREAS, yet in 1990 Congress acceded to environmentalists’ demands by placing another million acres off limits to multiple-use, while proclaiming that “not a single job will be lost”, and

WHEREAS, that is not how it worked out, and

WHEREAS, in 1990 there were approximately 4,000 timber jobs in Southeast Alaska, in 2016 we have approximately 300, and

WHEREAS, Congress has now set aside about 40% of the Tongass National Forest and the United States Forest Service has administratively set aside another 51%. That leaves only 9% of the forest accessible and the United States Forest Service has been closing many of the existing roads and placed all but 2% of the forest off limits to timber harvesting, and

WHEREAS, in 2013 the undersecretary of the United States Forest Service declared they would begin an aggressive transition away from old growth logging and in 5 to 10 years cut only young growth trees; Even though the young trees are below market value, too small to harvest and none of the mills in Southeast Alaska are prepared to mill young growth trees, and

WHEREAS, mill owners and logging companies have declared they will be leaving Southeast Alaska if there is not a sustainable amount of wood provided from the United States Forest Service; leaving communities to disappear without the economic support of the sawmills and timber jobs, and

WHEREAS, The State of Alaska has already prepared a draft selection of lands that might comprise the State Forest and we understand that the management of these lands would provide tens of millions of dollars of net revenue for the state in addition to the restoration of about two thousand jobs in the region. The legislative options for acquiring these lands include purchase of the lands over time through net revenue sharing, State land selections pursuant to the Statehood Act as well as other options.

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska follows the State Forest Practice Act and would be able to manage timber areas more efficiently and effectively, and

WHEREAS, The Tongass National Forest is a national treasure, it should provide homes and jobs to the people that have been living there for many years, and

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, we fully support HR3650, a bill that directs the Department of Agriculture, through the United States Forest Service to convey to a state up to 2 million acres of

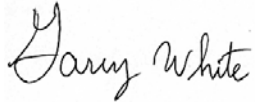
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eligible portions of the National Forest System (NFS) in it that it elects to acquire through enactment by the state legislature of a bill meeting certain criteria. Portions of the NFS conveyed to a state shall be administered and managed primarily for timber production.

ADOPTED BY THE SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE ON MARCH 29, 2016 AND IS DUE TO SUNSET ON MARCH 30, 2017.

Witness By:

Attest:



Garry White, President



Shelly Wright, Executive Director