

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN

For Immediate Release: (March 26, 2014)

Senate Approves Resolution to Acquire Tongass National Forest Land

(Juneau) – Today, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 (SCR 2), sponsored by Senator Bert Stedman, R-Sitka.

SCR 2 urges the U.S. Congress to act on a request by the governor to acquire additional state land in the Tongass National Forest. The resolution asks the governor to acquire land in the Tongass by purchase or negotiation or by seeking amendment to the Alaska Statehood Act. Approximately 5,500,000 acres of statehood entitlement land granted to Alaska by the federal government have not yet been conveyed.

In his speech on the Senate floor, Senator Stedman said, “the people in Southeast Alaska should have the ability to expand their communities and be self-sustaining. The lack of access to a commercially viable timber supply and the closure of the pulp mills resulted in the loss of roughly 30 percent of the economic base in my district.”

Immediately prior to receiving a unanimous vote in favor of passage, nine other Senators joined Senator Stedman by asking to be listed as co-sponsors of the resolution. SCR 2 now goes to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Coincidentally, just a few hours before SCR 2 passed the Senate the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled to uphold the exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule. In response, Senator Stedman said, “I’m extremely pleased to see the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals finally recognizes the seriousness of the impact the roadless rule has on local communities in the Tongass National Forest. There are 32 communities in the region and the roadless rule would have condemned these communities to continued isolation and the inability to access resources for economic development.”

For more information, contact Senator Stedman’s office at 907-465-3873.

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