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Senate Approves Land Exchange to Allow for Timber Harvest

JUNEAU – The Alaska State Senate unanimously approved a measure today allowing for a land exchange between the state and federal government to make 20,000 acres available for timber harvesting.

[Senate Bill 88](#), sponsored by Sen. Bert Stedman (R-Sitka), would facilitate a land trade between the Alaska Mental Health Trust (AMHT) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), in which the state of Alaska would receive nearly 20,000 acres available for timber harvesting in exchange for approximately 18,000 acres near and adjacent to several Southeast communities.

“I applaud my Senate colleagues for supporting this win-win-win proposal,” said Sen. Stedman. “The mental health trust will raise revenue for the services they provide to disadvantaged Alaskans, our logging industry will have access to timber supply, and our communities will not have logging occur in their viewsheds. Providing for a timber supply is critical to job creation and the economy of Southeast Alaska.”

Completing the transfer requires legislation from both the Legislature and the Congress. SB 88, in conjunction with U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski’s [S. 131](#) and U.S. Rep. Don Young’s [H.R. 513](#) details the process of the land exchange, including maps of land parcels, costs that must be paid by the AMHT and other involved parties, the timeline and order of priority for the exchange and how to handle potential differing value of the final appraisal.

“The revenue gained by the Mental Health Trust will fund programs that serve some of the most vulnerable Alaskans, those who live with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer’s disease, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse disorders.” said Sen. Stedman.

SB 88 is now on its way to the Alaska House of Representatives for consideration.

For more information, contact Senate Majority Press Secretary [Daniel McDonald](#) at (907) 465-4066

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