



**HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA**  
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April 10, 2018

Christine Klein, Director  
University of Alaska  
Facilities and Land Management  
1815 Bragaw Street, Suite 101  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508-3438  
[Ua-land@alaska.edu](mailto:Ua-land@alaska.edu)

Dear Christine:

The Haines Borough is responding to the university's Public Notice: Haines Parcels - 10-year Negotiated Timber Sale Development and Disposal Plan and DNR's news release of March 28 describing the coordination of the State Division of Forestry, the University of Alaska Land Office and the Mental Health Trust to provide a target volume of 150 million board feet over a 10-year period.

We are challenged to appreciate the enormity of this development and the impact it would have on our community. Our most immediate request is to call for more information specific to the development plan. We would also like to be recognized as stakeholders with a seat at the table. We look forward to meeting with you in Haines on April 26 to learn more about your plans.

Our initial interest is to understand the forest management principles guiding the University's decisions and the project timeline. The annual allowable cut in the Haines State Forest is 5.88 million board feet.<sup>1</sup> Forested lands owned by the University and Mental Health were removed from the Haines State Forest (HSF) timber base in 2002, so relevant data is not available to us now. However, simple arithmetic indicates that 9.12 million board feet (55% more than is allowable in HSF)

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<sup>1</sup> Haines State Forest Plan, August 2002, 2-7

would be provided by the University and Mental Health resources to meet the target volume. This does not appear sustainable.

A secondary interest is the apparent focus on the sale of timber to support scholarships rather than what the sale of timber could mean to Alaska's residents. It appears that the University believes the highest value is revenue from the sale of timber in this round. We know the quality of the HSF biomass is moderate to poor, so, even at fair market price, projected revenues are not significant. We prefer to see the state, the University and Mental Health maximize revenue and create wealth in the community and Alaska.

At a public hearing on April 2, the Assembly heard from 46 residents representing a wide spectrum of opinion. Regardless of one's position on the concept of timber harvest, a unifying concept is that any development of a public resource should benefit current and new residents who relocate in response to economic opportunity. You have stated your expectation to provide training for residents, new jobs and capital projects. We want to explore what that means to you. We want to avoid the boom-bust cycle lived out from the 1960s through the 1990s. We want to encourage a partnership that builds community by providing set-aside sales for local entrepreneurs and incentives and investment for local processing of wood product.

Haines Economic Development Corporation is currently consulting with McDowell Group to generate an analysis of the varying opportunities the proposal offers and how to engage all stakeholders in productive discussion. We strongly encourage engaging the University's Center for Economic Development (CED) in this project. This timber sale could be the generic core of a strategy to build community by promoting economic diversity through entrepreneurship. We would prefer that Alaskans benefit from value-added processing on this end of the supply chain rather than exporting the opportunity outside of Alaska. Reforestation offers sustainable economic opportunity, and we could plan for that.

We also seek greater understanding on other aspects of the proposed development. These include the University's attitude about establishing wildlife corridors and protecting and/or developing existing trails as an economic driver for tourism, most notably the historic Dalton Trail running through five sections of university land in Township 28-29S, Range 55-56E. The DNR news release states that you will work to facilitate any financing and construction of infrastructure, and we wonder what

roads, bridges and port facilities may be contemplated or needed, and how the Borough could be expected to participate.

We appreciate that the proposed timber harvest would change the nature of this community forever. For this reason it is right to recognize the Borough as a stakeholder and that the University, Mental Health, DNR, and the Borough engage in frank and sincere discussion toward a win-win outcome. We look forward to our discussions on April 26.

Sincerely,

Jan Hill  
Mayor

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