



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Governor Palin Responds to Tongass National Forest Plan Calls for Cooperation and Balance**

January 12, 2007, Juneau, Alaska – Governor Palin today reaffirmed her commitment to responsible resource development by supporting the process for a balanced Tongass National Forest Plan. The United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service on Friday, January 12, released to the public a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and opened a 90-day public comment period for citizens wishing to express their opinions on forest management issues. The State agreed to continue its participation in the Tongass Plan amendment process as a cooperating agency.

“It is important for the State to remain engaged in this process – to protect the interest of Alaskans,” said Governor Palin. “I am committed to working with the Federal government to reestablish a workable Tongass Forest Plan that allows a sufficient and stable supply of timber enabling Southeast Alaska to have a sustainable, integrated timber industry.”

The DEIS is a comprehensive document which considers conservation of fish and game habitat resources, recreation and tourism activities, and industrial development (timber and minerals) within the Tongass National Forest. To ensure the interests of the State are balanced and equally comprehensive, the Governor has assigned staff from multiple agencies to work together to coordinate the State of Alaska’s input as the Forest Service works to finalize the Tongass Plan.

Governor Palin believes the Tongass Plan is a critical element that will provide a basis for stabilizing and reinvigorating Southeast Alaska’s economy and way of life. Currently, only 4 percent of the Tongass Forest is available for timber harvest. The Forest Service Amendment Plan includes seven alternatives for timber harvest. The public is invited to view the options at <http://tongass-fpadjust.net>.

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