

October 19, 2007

Joe Balash
US Dept. of Agriculture
Room 1217-E Jamie L. Whitten Bld.
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Mr. Balash:

A lawsuit was filed regarding the "Three Mile Timber Harvest" on Kuiu Island within the Tongass National Forest. The US Forest Service lost that lawsuit because it refused to correct the inadequacies in both the Morse annual demand calculation and the 1997 Haynes and Brooks demand analysis. By losing this lawsuit the USFS timber program loses significant amounts of timber which can create considerable employment and economic diversity for our communities in Southeast Alaska.

The agency is now relying on a combination of the Morse annual demand and the 1996 Brackley report. The Brackley report has the same flaws as the 1997 Haynes and Brooks. The Morse calculation conflicts and arguably trumps the Brackley report because it simply says the demand equals whatever was logged the year before. (The Forest Service argues that Morse also provides for additional capacity, but we cannot build capacity until we have a timber supply - catch-22).

The USFS economists have yet to acknowledge the admissions they made at the August 6, 2007 demand meeting in Juneau. It appears they are not willing to change the mind set they have had for the past 10 years. In order to succeed with a viable timber program we need some new thinking and new analysis information.

Southeast Conference commissioned a timber demand study by the McDowell Group and also the Cascade Appraisal analysis. These reports are complete and are available upon request. We need to find a way to persuade the USFS to adopt these demand reports.

There is not time for any new analysis and after 10-years of failure, it is time to convince the Forest Service that new formulas must be used!

The judge issuing the Three Mile decision has taken the position that the demand analysis represents the ceiling for timber sales. This is the reverse of the intent of the 1990 legislation, but the reality is the USFS has never offered more timber than is justified by the demand analysis. This issue must be resolved.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shelly Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shelly Wright
Executive Director
Southeast Conference

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cc: Commissioner Tom Irwin