



LEGISLATIVE AND POLITICAL RELATIONS

Joseph M. Stanton
Chief Lobbyist

June 27, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Stevens:

On behalf of the 220,000 members of the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), I am writing to ask that you oppose the Tongass amendment to the Fiscal Year 2006 Department of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (H.R. 2361), which would limit the use of funds for planning, designing, studying, or construction of forest development roads in the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

The Tongass Roadless amendment, expected to be offered by Senator John Sununu (R-NH), would prohibit funding for road building in specific areas of the Tongass National Forest, limiting the ability of forest managers to locally address site specific issues as they arise. NAHB opposes the Tongass amendment because it mandates inflexible federal restrictions on forestland without the input and assistance of the local interests who are most affected.

Although NAHB recognizes the need for designated roadless and wilderness areas, the Tongass Roadless amendment, like the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (66 FR 3244, January 12, 2001), would curtail thoughtful planning for the long-term health of our forests and utilization of our country's timber resources. As you may know, lumber is the primary component used in home building and limiting timber resources hurts housing affordability.


The local forest planning process established by Congress in the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) requires the creation of land and resource management plans for the National Forests under its jurisdiction, with the assistance of local governments, tribes, states, organizations, and citizens.

NAHB strongly believes that the federal government alone does not have the expertise to establish specific planning guidelines for the thousands of individual localities and forestry areas in the United States. Forest management decisions impacting the infrastructure necessary for community development normally include the extensive input of local officials. However, the Tongass Roadless amendment, like the Roadless Rule, would replace the input of local land management officials with inflexible federal restrictions.

The Honorable Ted Stevens
June 27, 2005
Page 2

The restrictions imposed in the Tongass Roadless amendment would ignore local and regional expertise in land management, and hurt local economies. I urge you to consider the negative effects of this amendment and to oppose the Sununu amendment during consideration of the Fiscal Year 2006 Interior Appropriations Act (H.R. 2361). Thank you for considering these views.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Stanton

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