



City of Pelican

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EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

CITY OF PELICAN, ALASKA RESOLUTION 2024-12

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PELICAN, ALASKA URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO INCLUDE THE TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST IN THE PROPOSED NATIONAL OLD GROWTH FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT RULE.

WHEREAS; the City of Pelican is a first-class city in the state of Alaska; and

WHEREAS; the City of Pelican supports its citizens in their use of productive forest lands for harvest of deer, fish, plants, and small-scale use of forest products; and

WHEREAS; old growth forests provide the best sources for the viewing, hunting, and gathering of animals, fish, and plants, and is of critical importance to protecting and preserving our gathering practices, subsistence activities, culture, and ways of life; and

WHEREAS; large-scale clearcut logging creates areas that are less pleasant for residents and visitors to view, and less productive for hunting and gathering; and

WHEREAS; the City of Pelican and its citizens and organizations have long struggled to keep clearcut logging to a minimum in the lands near our homes; and

WHEREAS; our community would prefer to enjoy the remaining old-growth forests rather than spending inordinate amounts of time fighting to protect them from large-scale harvest; and

WHEREAS; the United States Department of Agriculture (the Department) is preparing an environmental impact statement that will propose "to amend all land management plans for units of the National Forest System ... to include consistent direction to conserve and steward existing and recruit future old-growth forest conditions, "88 Fed. Ref. 88,042 (Dec. 20, 2023); and

WHEREAS; the preliminary proposed action the Department is considering would prohibit commercial logging of old-growth trees in all national forest except the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS; instead of providing for the protection of old-growth trees in the Tongass, the preliminary proposed action would allow commercial logging of old-growth on the Tongass where "necessary to allow for implementation of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, "88 Fed. Reg. 88,047; and

WHEREAS; the City of Pelican does not support this exemption, at least not for large-scale industrial uses, and urges the Department to remove it from the preliminary proposed rule; and

WHEREAS; no exemption is needed to allow for implementation of beneficial aspects of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy that Pelican supports, which include refocusing forest management on restoration, recreation, and resilience, as well as improving engagement with Tribal Nations and identifying opportunities for investment to reflect the needs and opportunities in the region; and

WHEREAS; an exemption that allows for continued commercial old-growth logging would threaten the ways of life of our citizens and force the citizens of Pelican to continue to use its resources to fight logging proposals and advocate for durable protection of our traditional territory; and

WHEREAS; although the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy provides for an end to large-scale old growth timber sales on the Tongass, the Forest Service has continued to offer old-growth timber sales under the strategy; and

WHEREAS; the Southeast Alaska Sustainable Strategy has not been adopted or defined through regulations or other durable policy guidance and can easily be changed by a future federal administration; and

WHEREAS; durable protection for old-growth trees in the Tongass is needed; and

WHEREAS; the preliminary proposed action also includes an exception that allows old-growth logging for culturally significant uses, 88 Fed. Reg. 88,047; and

WHEREAS; the City of Pelican strongly supports the culturally significant uses exception, which is important for ensuring that tribal citizens may continue the selective cutting of trees needed to practice their heritage; then

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the City of Pelican supports protecting the remaining old growth trees in the Tongass from any large-scale commercial logging, and urges the Department to remove the Tongass exemption from the proposed national old-growth forest plan amendment to ensure that the old-growth trees of the Tongass are protected from large-scale commercial logging; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City of Pelican urges the Department to retain the culturally significant uses exception.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED THIS 12th DAY OF JUNE 2024.

Signed: Patricia Phillips
Patricia Phillips, Mayor

Attest: Raven Hanson
Raven Hanson, City Clerk

