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A mill on POW claims they employ 45 workers as well as being the sole source of acoustic grade spruce for a New York high-end piano manufacturer that employs an additional 200 workers.
We are being led to believe an operation of this size can only exist through extensive roadbuilding and associated old-growth clearcutting necessary to pay for that roadbuilding.

In contrast, at least one small mill in the Ketchikan area with one or two workers has been operating over 45 years with an estimated 90% of its raw logs coming from windthrow or landslides, i.e., dead and down trees. The other 10% came from mostly live trees: USFS free use permits, private landowners clearing their land, a USFS log auction and other sawlogs coming from decades old road-based logging operations, i.e., most without tens of millions of dollars of subsidies from U.S. taxpayers, subsidies that end up providing millions of board feet in round log exports to China, and other places that ultimately garner the lion's share of the value from those logs.

Between historic windthrows and landslides along SE Ak shorelines coupled with windthrow and landslides along the thousands of miles of existing logging roads, some astute satellite surveillance coupled with LIDAR analysis should identify a lot of dead and down merchantable timber. Plus, the coming on line second growth stands from Federal, State and private landowners will add to a respectable ASQ.

But the rare, slow-grown, fine grained, clear acoustic grade spruce for high-end piano sound boards comes from old growth ecosystems in SE Alaska where short growing seasons produce the tight growth rings.

So, we have a mill with a forty-five-man workforce that claims it cannot survive without slowly exterminating the old growth ecosystems necessary to grow its acoustic spruce.

As for the piano maker, their plant in Hamburg, Germany is also hard-pressed to find enough European acoustic spruce, in part because a warming climate causes those trees to put on too much growth, so the growth ring count becomes too coarse for top quality piano sound boards. A longer-term solution like carbon credits to keep trees standing would help some.

In short, we have an industry built upon trees that germinated in 16th century ecosystems, an industry built up from a 19th century dream, an industry dependent upon a 20th century acoustic wood supply that's now jeopardized by 21st century climate.

Yes, it's possible to access more of those fine-grained 500+ year-old spruce with even more taxpayer-subsidized roads and clearcuts to keep Steinway producing their exquisitely crafted pianos. But eliminating the ecosystems that produce those acoustic spruce runs into diminishing returns because the plantation grown second growth will never replace the original wood quality. And that's not even addressing numerous other issues; increased wildfires, warming oceans, melting sea ice and permafrost, eroding coastlines, to name a few.

Sooner or later Steinway, Viking Lumber, and Alaska Forest Association will have to face the music that suing USDA to get access to more wood will be a short term, temporary fix that ultimately exacerbates the exceedingly complex problem of anthropogenic climate change.