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For Alaska



## "THE NOOSE AROUND LOGGING'S NECK"

The current status of Federal legislation and administrative policy affecting Alaska's logging industry can be best summed up by George Bernard Shaw's comment: "Except during the nine months before he draws his first breath, no man manages his affairs as well as a tree does".

Alaska's logging industry already faces tremendous competitive disadvantages. Our small timber companies require more assistance than those in the "lower 48", which at least benefit from lower living costs and a well developed transportation network, to make their product more accessible to markets. Furthermore, "lower 48" states have less timber and economic diversity than we do in Alaska.

One of the gravest injustices brought upon our logging industry in Alaska was the exclusion of the State from having the Forest Service construct logging access roads for small timber companies, as it does everywhere else in the U.S. The Senate has recognized the error of this exclusion, and I have been promised that hearings will be held next year on Alaska loggers unique problems. This important agreement was the result of an amendment I introduced to S. 1360.

S. 1360 revises the National Forest Management Act of 1976, and the bill is intended to improve timber sales procedures. Most importantly, this bill provides the mechanism for long range improvements in timber sales procedures through establishment of an Advisory Commission which would suggest changes in the procedures.

However, this Advisory Commission does not add a permanent tier to the U.S.D.A. bureaucracy, but terminates upon submission of its findings to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Congress. Enactment of this bill is essential to develop more realistic timber sales procedures.

Current appraisal practices are literally strangling Alaska's logging industry. Stumpage prices have increased over 1,000% in the last two years, while world market prices for logs, pulp and chip, have steadily decreased. This bill provides the opportunity for the total revision of pricing practices necessary to allow timber companies to operate more efficiently and profitably, and for the Forest Service to maintain sound silvicultural practices. Alaska, particularly, needs a new pricing mechanism to sustain the logging industry which is the heart of the State's Southeastern economy.

Another issue that will be investigated during the promised hearings, is the standards for logging haul roads. Currently, many logging roads must be built to recreational use standards when they will only be utilized by the timber companies, and after completion of logging in that area, they will be destroyed. It is wasteful and expensive to build roads to such high standards in areas in the Southeast which are virtually un-inhabited.

Our united front is the key to winning our way with Congress and the Administration on industrial issues such as logging. It would do us all well to remember the words of Ben Franklin: "We must all hang together or assuredly we shall all hang separately".