

Editorial not constructive

To the Editor:

Your editorial in the November 16th issue concerned the "easements" for the pulp mill in Ketchikan. The easements are actually variances that have been requested to apply to mill water effluent at the end of the outflow pipe. A variance would allow a departure from a national standard. Variances can legally be granted and Congress provided this flexibility in order to allow for differences between various specific mills.

Your editorial only mentions Ketchikan, but in fact the tentative denial of variance also includes Alaska Lumber and Pulp in Sitka. The editorial implies

beyond doubt that no variance should be granted, citing conditions alleged to exist in the Fox River Valley in Wisconsin where the editor grew up.

A comparison such as this is without merit and does not lend support to concerned citizens in Southeast, whose economy is heavily dependent on a timber industry in that region.

If in fact, the conditions at the two pulp mills resembled or paralleled those at Fox River during the editor's childhood, we would all agree there was a problem. The conditions, of course, are not at all like those implied and due to geography, etc., never could be.

It would be more construc-

tive if the editorial had dealt with the existing situation at each mill in Alaska, rather than raising a shibboleth from a distant Outside location on an inland river.

In fact, the issue is not one of reasonable environmental protection. It really concerns just how far society is willing to go and what price will be paid to achieve conformity with an arbitrary national standard.

We residents of Sitka suggest a proper balance be struck based on informed choices rather than the thinking represented in the editorial.

Sincerely,

H.E. Hays
Sitka