

By: Emerson Krueger
Introduced: August 2, 2021
Public Hearing: August 16, 2021
Action: Failed

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
PLANNING COMMISSION RESOLUTION NO. 21-18

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDING ASSEMBLY ADOPTION AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TIMBER SALVAGE SALES TERMS IN MSB 23.20.130 AND REPEALING THE TIMBER TRANSPORT PERMIT IN MSB 28.60.

WHEREAS, The Matanuska-Susitna Borough is heavily infested with spruce bark beetles and birch leafminers with hundreds of thousands of acres affected during the past several years; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with the adopted Borough Forest Management Plan, the intent of the proposed Code amendments is to provide a sustainable supply of timber and other forest products, manage Borough forest stands to promote tree survival and growth, and reduce the risk of loss from fires, animals, insects, and diseases, and to achieve a balance between wood volume production, quality of wood, and timber value at harvest; and

WHEREAS, amending MSB 23.20 will incentivize removal of commercial timber either killed or damaged by events such as wildfire, windstorms, insects, or disease, and is consistent with management objectives for Borough resources; and

WHEREAS, offering a simplified avenue to salvage Borough timber in a timely, more efficient way before the market value of

the timber is lost to insect damage, fire, windthrow and rot provides much needed incentive to commercial loggers; and

WHEREAS, offering salvage sales by over-the-counter means is consistent with other Borough land and resource disposal programs under Title 23; and

WHEREAS, requirement for a timber transport permit and a traffic safety plan was adopted in 2006, with only one such timber transport permit having ever been issued for a harvest that was never cut; and

WHEREAS, timber industry representatives have indicated the code requirement is onerous and detrimental to the Borough's efforts to sell timber and has resulted in zero responses to Borough timber sales over the years; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Forest Resources and Practices Act contains sufficient safeguards for the public health, safety, and environment, which are further supplemented by the Borough Code requirements for artificial lighting, noise, and buffers; and

WHEREAS, traffic safety standards promulgated by the Alaska Department of Transportation apply to all industries and all public roads and the Borough does not need to develop industry specific traffic safety standards; and

WHEREAS, Borough road maintenance concerns related to Borough timber sale contracts ~~can~~shall be adequately addressed in timber

sale contracts that have been reviewed by the Borough Attorney's office; and

WHEREAS, Title 28 is adjudicated by the Borough Planning Department who has reviewed and concurs with the amendments for Title 23 and supports repealing MSB 28.60.070 and 23.60.080 in their entirety as such requirements are addressed in state laws and requirements already in place and can be supported with specific Borough timber sale contract clauses.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission supports the adoption of an ordinance amending MSB 23.20 in support of timber salvage sales and repealing the traffic safety plan and timber transport permit requirements from MSB 28.60.

ADOPTED by the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission this ____ day of ____, 2021.

COLLEEN VAGUE, Chair

ATTEST

Karol Riese, Planning Clerk

(SEAL)

Yes: Commissioner Vague, Commissioner Glashan, and Commissioner Chesbro

No: Commissioner Anderson