

LAND EXCHANGE LEGISLATION

About

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority has been funding programs that serve Alaska's most vulnerable populations for the past two decades. This includes programs for mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, traumatic brain injuries, and substance abuse disorders.

In order to support vital mental health services for Alaskans, the Trust needs to continue to generate revenue from its land and resources. This effort is managed by the Trust Land Office.

Impact

The Trust grants approximately \$20 million annually to projects, activities, state agencies and nonprofits that improve the lives of their beneficiaries in the areas of:

- Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment
- Housing and Long-term Services & Supports
- Disability Justice
- Employment & Engagement

The Land Exchange

For nearly a decade, the Trust Land Office has been working to exchange lands with the United States Forest Service. Numerous meetings have been conducted with individuals, agencies, communities, environmental organizations, and the USFS to identify and select the parcels that were included in the Agreement to Initiate that was signed June 30, 2015.

Senator Murkowski introduced legislation last year which nearly passed. This year all three members of the Alaska Congressional Delegation have introduced companion bills, S.131 and H.R.513.

To view the text and track the progress of the bills, go to:

congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/131
congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/513

Details

- 17,341 acres of Trust lands adjacent to the communities of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Sitka, and Juneau would be transferred to the USFS
- 20,580 acres of remote land on Prince of Wales Island and Shelter Cove would be transferred the Trust for development and timber harvest

Why Support the Exchange?

The land exchange is the most responsible way to fulfill the mission of the Trust, while avoiding the potential adverse impacts on tourism, recreation, wildlife management, and watershed protection. The exchange also protects what remains of the timber industry in Southeast Alaska by providing more timber lands that could be managed on a sustainable yield basis.

The Exchange:

- Protects popular trails, viewsheds, and iconic recreational sites along the Inside Passage
- Ensures watersheds are protected so that Southeast residents receive clean water
- Preserves certain old growth timber stands in the forest
- Ensures jobs stay in the Southeast communities by protecting the timber and tourism industries
- Protects mental health services by providing revenue to support the Trust's mission

Without this legislation, less funding would be available to support mental health programs in our communities. We are committed to working toward a solution that benefits all Alaskans.

How to Help

Please join us in supporting the land exchange and the larger mission of the Trust. Email the Alaska Congressional Delegation to thank them and express your support of the legislation.

Senator Murkowski: www.murkowski.senate.gov/contact/email

Senator Sullivan: www.sullivan.senate.gov/contact/email

Representative Young: www.donyoung.house.gov/contact/

“This is a widely supported, common sense solution that will deliver real economic and environmental benefits for Southeast communities. It is one of my top legislative priorities, and my goal is to have it signed into law as quickly as possible.”

— Senator Lisa Murkowski