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Sealaska bill included as part of National Defense Authorization Act

WASHINGTON – Last night, House and Senate lawmakers attached several public lands bills to the National Defense Authorization Act, including S.340, Alaska Senator Lisa Murkowski's "Southeast Alaska Native Land Entitlement Finalization and Jobs Protection Act" (Sealaska bill), which would convey to Sealaska Corporation approximately 70,000 acres within the Tongass National Forest. The Sealaska bill would also conserve more than 150,000 acres spread across eight areas in the Tongass forest.

Statement by Cindy Shogan, Executive Director, Alaska Wilderness League:

"The Tongass National Forest is a world-class fishery and tourist destination, and is the crown jewel of our national forest system. It is never a good day when we lose thousands of acres of valuable Tongass old-growth. Decades of clear-cutting have already led to the decimation of much of the old-growth in the Tongass and have greatly increased the expanse of degraded wildlife habitat, however, we are heartened by the inclusion of more than 150,000 acres of conservation that is included in this legislation. Alaska Wilderness League will continue to focus on protecting the old-growth trees and thousands of miles of pristine streams, rivers and lakes within the Tongass that support fishing, tourism and recreation, which are southeast Alaska's sustainable industries."

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