

CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA  
RESOLUTION 2010-04

A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA SUPPORTING USFS FUNDING  
REQUESTS FOR THE SITKA FOREST SERVICE OFFICE

WHEREAS, the Forest Service is one of the top fifteen employers within the City and Borough of Sitka, of which the majority of the Forest Service managed 1.8 million acres resides within the Sitka Borough boundary; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service plans to build an office facility that will enhance both community and visitor services as an important gateway to the Tongass National Forest (NF); and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service recognizes their warehouse is too large and wants to better utilize the warehouse as office space; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service plans to construct a new green (electricity and biomass) office and remodel the warehouse for office space on Forest Service land. This will provide our taxpayers with an annual savings of \$300,000; and

WHEREAS, the new facilities will provide office space for the current staffing of 76 permanent employees, plus temporaries and volunteers. The facility plan provides for additional office space if Congress mandates additional land management objectives for the lands surrounding Sitka; and

WHEREAS, in 2009/10, the Tongass NF submitted this new office project as a top priority for American Recovery and reinvestment Act (ARRA) 2009 stimulus funding in the initial request. This project was recently resubmitted for ARRA funding if additional funding should become available; and

WHEREAS, in 2009/10 the Tongass NF has invested over \$400,000 to complete the environmental analysis and design. A design-build contract will be ready for bid if the dollars were made available within 30 days. This could provide local jobs in Sitka; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Service has a commitment to the community of Sitka and is seeking funding for their new office facilities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska hereby supports the Forest Service request for ARRA funds or other funds that are available.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, on this 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2010.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott McAdams, Mayor

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Colleen Ingman, MMC Municipal Clerk

**FOREST SERVICE request for the City and Borough of Sitka's support for seeking new office facilities funding.**

Existing: The Forest Service FS has been leasing office space for over 20 years paying up to \$600,000 a year. There is a strong commitment to maintain staffing for managing the Tongass National Forest in the community of Sitka.

An environmental analysis (EA) was completed in 2009 addressing the need for a new FS office in Sitka, identifying opportunities for tax payer savings. During the analysis process there were concerns addressing the size of the new office and accommodating the existing staff currently employed by the Forest Service, PNW and State and Private (76+temps and volunteers). The EA only addressed the new office (48 employees) because it was a new ground disturbing action being proposed. An EA is not required to reconstruct an existing administrative building (warehouse) into office space on National Forest land.

**New Office Proposal:**

- Construct a new office (48 employees) on federal land which will save taxpayers an estimate of \$300,000 per year. This is a significant savings opportunity and the dollars could be used for other priority projects such as wildlife habitat restoration, riparian enhancement, recreation cabins and trails, wilderness restoration, subsistence, facilities and etc. across the nation and likely create jobs.
- Reconstruct the warehouse for office space (32 employees) which will consist of an elevator, windows, as well as carrying the common theme of the new office throughout the warehouse office space. The warehouse provides the flexibility for additional positions in the future if funded by Congress.
- The new office will be energy efficient or "green" building that will have dual heating capability utilizing electricity and biomass. Biomass could come from second growth (young growth) from the Tongass NF. Young growth biomass removal projects have the opportunity to create jobs locally.

**Funding:**

- The Tongass has invested \$400,000 into the analysis and design for the facilities. The project will be a design-build contract creating job opportunities in Sitka.
- The Tongass NF identified the Sitka office as the top priority for American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) stimulus funding. We have resubmitted this project for ARRA funding if additional funds become available. The FS received 1.2 billion dollars and it is predicted that not all of the money will be spent as planned. This could be an opportunity to fund our new office facilities.
- The new office was also rated as the #1 project for the Alaska Regional priority list for large Capital Investment Projects (CIP), submitted last fall. However, fire facilities across the nation received most of the CIP funding.

Carol Goularte, Sitka District Ranger

MARK BEGICH  
ALASKA

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

COMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE AND TRANSPORTATION

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 2, 2010

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510 L STREET  
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Mr. Tom Tidwell  
Chief  
US Department of Agriculture, Forest Service  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20250-0002

Dear Chief Tidwell:

Let me begin by saying thank you for meeting with me earlier this month. I thought the meeting was very productive, and I look forward to working with you on the issues we discussed.

Second, I voice my support for two USDA Forest Service projects under consideration for the Tongass National Forest.

1. **Sitka Co-Located Administrative Office Facility:** It is my understanding the Forest Service has requested \$6.5 million to construct a new office facility and renovate adjacent warehouse space to replace existing leased office space. The proposed design apparently will follow Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) principles for construction, and will maximize energy efficiency and utilize locally procured biomass energy for heating the building. In addition to substantial annual operating savings for the Forest Service, this project would serve as a model "green building" for the community while creating good jobs and helping to develop new standards and skills for people involved in the local construction trades.

It is my understanding the land has been secured and the necessary design work completed for this project. This makes the project nearly "shovel ready" and would create good jobs soon for Southeast Alaska. Furthermore, this project has been ranked as the number 1 large construction project in both the Tongass National Forest and the Alaska Region, and has been submitted to your office for consideration for approval during an upcoming re-allocation of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds.

2. **Petersburg Co-Located Administrative Office Facility:** I understand the proposed Petersburg project, which is similar in purpose and benefits to the proposed facility in Sitka, involves construction of a new office building

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and consolidation of personnel who currently work in disparate locations. The Forest Service estimates this project would cost \$6 million.

While this facility has not yet achieved the same status as the Sitka project within the Forest Service because the acquisition of the site is pending a land exchange with the State of Alaska, it is my understanding, if funding became available, the project could be brought forward fairly quickly.

In summary, I strongly support the investment by the Forest Service in both the Sitka and Petersburg projects. Both projects support your priority of alternative energy systems, and both projects will create badly-needed jobs in Southeast Alaska. As you consider the re-allocation of any unused ARRA funds for construction projects, I urge you to include funding for the Sitka and Petersburg facilities. Finally, I also encourage you to rank both projects high on the list for FY 2011 Forest Service construction projects.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly or have your staff contact Michael Johnson in my office at (202) 224-5728.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Begich". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being more prominent than the last name "Begich".

Mark Begich  
United States Senator

CC: Jay Jensen, USDA Deputy Under Secretary, Natural Resources and Environment