



Official Business

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR THOMAS H. WAGONER

- Chair, Senate Resources Committee
- Vice-Chair, Senate State Affairs Committee
- Member, Community & Regional Affairs
- Member, Legislative Council
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Session: January – May
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Sponsor Statement

SB 55 Agricultural Land

The Ross Miller family started homesteading twenty-seven acres of land in 1943 in Hope. The Millers leased fifteen acres of adjoining land from the Forest Service, in the early fifties, to use as pasture land. Due to the '64 earthquake, the Millers lost eighteen of their twenty-seven acre homestead. There was an earthquake exchange program set up and compensated the Millers for their loss by giving them only one acre of land. The state, after determining that the Millers had been treated unfairly, decided they were entitled to the fifteen acres of leased Forest Service land as relief. In 1978, agricultural rights to this land were conveyed as provided by former state law AS 38.05.321.

The Department of Natural Resources has declared that the state has no interest in retaining the remaining interest in this property, and support conveying the remaining land rights to the Millers. Unfortunately, DNR is not authorized to remove the agricultural restrictions under current statute.

SB 55 will make a minor statutory change to correct this situation. Anyone who received agricultural rights to land under sec. 6(a) of the Alaska Statehood Act, and the tracts of land were 15 acres or less, would be eligible for fee simple title if the owner pays the fair market value for the remaining interest.