



REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE DISTRICT 5

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Date: 2-2-06

To: Representative Olson, Co-Chair House C&RA

From: Representative Thomas, Co-Chair House C&RA

Re: Sponsor Statement for CSHB 378 An act designating a representative of a Haines nonprofit recreational group as an ex officio member of the Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council and removing the mayor of the City of Haines as an ex officio member of the council.

The Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve was created by the State of Alaska in 1982. The preserve, located along the Haines Highway, was created to protect the world's largest concentration of Bald Eagles and their habitat. Along with the large eagle population, the preserve is home to five species of salmon that spawn in the surrounding streams and tributaries.

At the heart of the Eagle Preserve, between 18 and 24 mile of the Haines Highway, is the main viewing area for eagle watchers. This area hosts a particularly large concentration of eagles due to the availability of salmon and open water in the winter months.

In order to protect the sanctity and utility of the Eagle Preserve, the Alaska Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council was created. The council consists of 12 seats representing local, state, environmental, traditional, and commercial interests. One of these seats is dedicated to the Haines City Mayor. However, the City of Haines and the Haines Borough have since consolidated leaving the seat for the Haines City Mayor open. CSHB 378 designates this open seat to a person who represents a recreational use who has been appointed by the Haines Borough Mayor.

I respectfully request your support of CSHB 378.

