

Kenai Peninsula Borough

Land Management Division

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Hibbert, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

THRU: Charlie Pierce, Mayor *JCB*
Brandi Harbaugh, Finance Director *BH*
Marcus Mueller, Land Manager *[Signature]*
Brenda Ahlberg, Community & Fiscal Projects Manager *Bl*

FROM: Trevor Kauffman, Land Management Agent *TK*

DATE: February 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Ordinance 2020-19- 22, Accepting and Appropriating \$9,600 from the State of Alaska Division of forestry to Supplement Costs to Manage the Slash Disposal Site Located in Cooper Landing (Mayor)

The Kenai Peninsula is currently experiencing widespread spruce mortality due to the increase in spruce bark beetle activity in area forests. Many land managers and private residents have chosen to remove infected trees in order to reduce risk of wildland fire on their property. Typically, the spruce is used for firewood or saw timber after removal, but the limbs, tops and other slash must be disposed in order to avoid stockpiling of fuel, which would create an exposure to fire hazard. Many landowners choose to burn the slash as it is often costly to haul it to solid waste disposal sites.

In Alaska, slash burning is regulated by the Alaska Division of Forestry between the months of April and September to manage the risk of escaped fires which may turn into large, destructive, and costly wildland fires. Slash burning is allowed under permit. However in 2020, the Alaska Division of Forestry suspended all burn permits, large and small, on the Kenai Peninsula for nearly the entire summer season to help mitigate the risk of wildland fire starts. The Division of Forestry anticipated difficulties in mobilizing firefighting resources due to the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 travel restrictions. This generated an increase in slash disposal transported to the solid waste sites.

The borough provides a slash disposal area in Cooper Landing at the Snug Harbor Material Site. The site saw significant use in 2020, and it is understood that this increased use was an indirect product of the State's burn suspension. Furthermore, Division of Forestry staff encouraged area residents to use the slash

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disposal area, as part of a grant-funded initiative to reduce fire risk around residential areas.

The Division of Forestry offered to supplement the borough's increased contractual cost of slash handling at the Snug Harbor Material Site in the amount of \$9,600.00 to burn the slash October 2020, after the State's regulated fire season had ended, and it was safe to do so.

Please consider the attached ordinance, which would accept and appropriate the \$9,600.00 from the Division of Forestry.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT FUNDS/ACCOUNT VERIFIED	
Acct. No.	<u>250.00000.00000.34147</u>
Amount	<u>\$9,600.00</u>
By:	<u>PP</u> Date: <u>2/4/2021</u>