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Subject: ANNOUNCEMENT: USDA Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy  
Date: January 13, 2022 at 11:01:34 AM AKST

On behalf of the Interagency Steering Team of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, I'm delighted to share this announcement regarding the initial investment into our communities, people, and the lands that sustain us:

Last summer, Secretary Tom Vilsack launched the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy to help support a diverse economy, enhance community resilience, and conserve natural resources in Southeast Alaska. The Secretary committed up to an initial \$25 million investment based on local priorities.

Throughout the fall of last year, the regional OneUSDA Team, comprised of representatives from the USDA Forest Service, Rural Development, and Natural Resources and Conservation Service consulted with Tribal Nations and Alaska Native corporations, and engaged with our partners to explore investment ideas from Southeast Alaska communities. We appreciate your consultation and engagement. The result was over 270 investment ideas, collectively valued at \$276 million. While not every idea or proposal can be included in this initial investment, the input, ideas, and conversations reflect the deep need for equitable economic stimulus in the region.

Selecting initial investments for our agency portfolios was not easy. The OneUSDA team employed a selection process to ensure the resulting investments meet the USDA commitment to equity and ecological, economic, and cultural sustainability and reflect the diverse opportunities and needs in Southeast Alaska.

The Secretary has determined the initial \$25 million investment will be divided into four broad categories with identified subcategories and the following recommended funding levels.

- Tribal and Indigenous Interests - \$12.5 million (50%)  
Art and Culture  
Food Security and Sovereignty  
Shared Stewardship  
Traditional Technical Knowledge and Cultural Use of Forest Products  
Workforce Development Projects
- Natural Resources - \$6.25 million (25%)  
Agriculture  
Mariculture  
Restoration  
Young Growth Forest Management
- Infrastructure - \$3.125 million (12.5%)  
Recreation Sites  
Renewable Energy  
Waste Management
- Community Capacity - \$3.125 million (12.5%)  
Tourism and Business Development  
Tribal and Community Youth Engagement  
Community Workforce Development

Balancing specific, initial investments within the above categories and themes provides clear direction and intent, as well as the flexibility to adjust specific funding allocations as determined by individual investment readiness. Each of the four broad categories align with desired short-term and long-term strategic outcomes benefiting Southeast Alaska.

Our next steps include focusing on implementing short-term investments in 2022 and continuing to build relationships and trust with you and a broad array of partners across Southeast Alaska. We will be working directly with organizations and Tribal Nations whose investment ideas most closely meet the intent of the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy, to refine project outcomes, funding amounts, and timeframes to enter into cooperative agreements. A list of organizations and Tribal Nations we will be working with to refine ideas and specific projects for the initial \$25 million short-term investments are posted on the project website. The Secretary's goal is to announce final projects and investments in March. The initial \$25 million builds upon the Department's full portfolio of funding through our regular program of work and other funding opportunities.

Our long-term strategy will include hiring a permanent interagency lead for the Sustainability Strategy, establishing a team charter for the Alaska-based OneUSDA team, and empowering shared leadership within the region by aligning agency programs with locally developed strategies such as the Blueprint for Southeast Alaska, the Visitor Products Cluster Working Group, the 2025 Economic Development Plan, and the All Landowners Working Group, among others.

We look forward to more conversations, firming up the investment proposals, and seeing these amazing ideas come to fruition. More information can be found at the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy website at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/r10/sass>. Please don't hesitate to contact us at [mailto:SM.FS.SASS\\_Info@usda.gov](mailto:SM.FS.SASS_Info@usda.gov) if you have questions.

With the highest regard for your ongoing commitment to the land, people, and culture of Southeast Alaska,

Keith Perkins, Area Manager  
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Samia Savell, Watershed Planner  
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Caring for the land and serving people

I live and work in Aak'w Kwaan territory.

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