

William Tonsgard Jr.
Juneau, AK, 99801 1
1/21/2019

Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
US Department of Agriculture
USDA Forest Service, Attn: Alaska Roadless Rule, P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, Alaska, 99802

Dear Sonny Perdue:

I would like to provide a viewpoint of the Tongass that is based on actual experiences over the years since 1950. My father was a logger and Tlingit Alaskan who was born in Juneau. All of our logging operations were on Federal land with the exception of two logging operations on Goldbelt's land. It is of great interest to me that so many Native groups are stepping up to protest the lifting of the roadless rule.

If the effects of logging will destroy native identity and their way of life then I seriously question how the logging on all the Native lands have not caused these fears. If one simply looks at all the Native owned land that has been logged it has literally been logged bald. In most cases very little stream buffers are left. Though these areas have been logged using this method the land is growing timber back in dramatic fashion. I seriously doubt and disagree with the viewpoint that fishing, whether salmon or recreational trout fishing, has been adversely affected.

The Forest Service has planned their logging and timber sales in a way to sustain the resource by providing buffer areas between sales so as to provide natural reseeding and protection of wildlife. As these areas grow back and new timber reproduction takes hold these buffer areas can be effectively logged at a later date.

Yes, our state should be diversified in the way of industry. But no industry should be vilified unjustly by special interests. Where would the tourist industry, the Trout Unlimited folks, bike tours hiking tours and virtually all tour activities be if there had not been any logging or mining in the Tongass? Three quarters of the road system in Southeast Alaska was constructed by the logging industry. If it had not been for that, there would be vastly fewer number roads today in much of Southeast Alaska and therefore less road for these tour groups to utilize.

This is a fact: Logging and mining jobs pay good wages, including health benefits and retirement. And most of those employed are locally hired employees. On the other hand, tourism jobs do not pay well, usually have no benefits for employees, are seasonal and in most cases the employees are hired from the lower 48 states who are brought here to Alaska during the summer months to work because it's cheaper for these companies to pay those people less than locals. Loggers and miners also haven't ever run over any whales, which has happened a few times thanks to the tour ships. The logging and mining industries don't pollute our air like the tour ships do on a daily basis from Ketchikan to Glacier Bay with the smoke from their diesel engines.

I have yet to see any factual truth that logging or mining in Southeast Alaska has had a negative impact on fishing or hunting. On the contrary, the fishing industry itself, along with the management of the fisheries, has done more damage to that industry than anything logging or mining has ever done. The fisheries almost fished the salmon to extinction with the use of fish traps. In my opinion, they're doing the same thing now by seining herring, which is the food of all fish and marine animals.

I am a member of Sealaska, Goldbelt and Takdeintaan Tribe of Hoonah. I am also part of the Tenakee Landless claim. I was born in Juneau and raised in logging camps all over Southeast Alaska. I've worked in most places in Southeast Alaska my whole life. I have revisited the areas we have logged over the years and have seen exactly zero negative impact from the logging we had done. What I know is from being on the ground in Southeast Alaska and I speak from my own knowledge, not from special interest talking points.

I believe in balance and truth. I hope the decision to lift the Roadless Rule is unimpeded.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'William Tonsgard Jr.', with a stylized, cursive script.

William Tonsgard Jr.