



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

October 29, 2019

akroadlessrule@fs.fed.us
USDA Forest Service
Attn: Alaska Roadless Rule
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, AK 99802

RE: Alaska Roadless Rule

Dear Secretary Perdue

The Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) Constitution declares as our peoples' inherent right that our tribal government, "Protect, preserve and enhance Tlingit 'Haa Aani' and Haida 'Íitl' tlagáay', our way of life, its ecosystems and resources, including the right to clean water and access to native foods and traditional practices through our inherent rights to traditional and customary hunting, fishing and gathering."

Tlingit & Haida works constructively with all elected officials of any political party without partisanship. We aim to be collaborative partners, working together in the best interest of Alaska- our homelands. Yet today we are challenged by our disagreement over the Alaska Roadless Rule. The tribal governments of southeast Alaska know our traditional territory, we have lived, depended on, and stewarded these lands and waters since time immemorial. As the original land managers, we know that the full exemption for development activities would forever harm our homelands.

Six federally recognized tribal governments stepped forward to engage on the Roadless Rule proposals with the State of Alaska and consult with the US Department of Agriculture; however, our tribes were treated as "cooperating agencies" instead of as sovereign tribal governments exercising our inherent rights. Despite inappropriate treatment, these tribes agreed to participate in order to be "at the table" instead of "on the menu." In addition to answering our communities' needs, and despite additional and significant impacts of government shutdowns and reduced program funding from our federal trustee, these tribes satisfied arbitrary and expedited deadlines to meaningfully engage in with state and federal representatives.

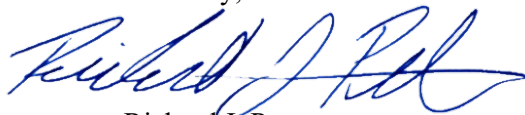
Each of our tribes has different needs and priorities. Some of our communities sought expanded protections to heal local lands after devastating logging practices. Others sought strategic adjustments to the Roadless Rule that would permit controls of local development. And not a single tribal government engaged as a cooperating agency advocated for a full and complete exemption of the Roadless Rule. In a word, our tribes are reasonable in being accountable to the unique needs of each of their communities.

We acknowledge that compromise is necessary, and our desired outcomes are not unreasonable; however, no outcome is credible unless tribal governments are respected as full partners in the decision-making process.

We implore the USDA and USFS to treat these federally recognized tribes as equal partners in the decision-making process – better yet, as subject matter experts.

Gunalchéesh/ Háw'aa, thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or need more information, please feel free to contact me _____

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard J. Peterson", written over a horizontal line.

Richard J. Peterson,
President