

December 12, 2019

USDA Forest Service
ATTN: Alaska Roadless Rule
P.O. Box 21628
Juneau, Alaska 999802

I support the Preferred Alternative, Alternative 6 – Full Exemption. The preferred alternative would exempt the Tongass National Forest and the Chugach National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule and is fully responsive to the state of Alaska's petition. The preferred alternative would remove all 9.2 Million Acres of inventoried roadless acres and would convert 165,000 old-growth acres and 20,000 young-growth acres previously identified as unsuitable timber lands to suitable timber lands.

Southeast Alaska was a vibrant timber industry prior to the implementation of the 2001 Roadless Rule. Approximately 3,650 jobs, both private and federal, and an annual payroll of \$211 million supported the economy of 34 coastal communities. To date about 8% of the 3,650 jobs remain and of those who remain are struggling to maintain Alaska's timber industry. Lifting the Roadless Rule would breath life back into this once strong Alaska region who was a major contributor to the nations timber industry and who can be again.

Currently the Roadless Rule curtails access for mineral exploration and development and severely hinders all forms of renewable energy development. Full exemption of the Roadless Rule will open the region to new developments in mining and renewable energy and connect area communities to these operations.

There are many deposits containing minerals that are crucial to the nations economic and national security, such as rare earth elements, of which the United States depends on other countries to supply 100% of our supply.

Road access is significant to Southeast Alaska's abundant water and steep terrain in making hydroelectric power and constructing transmission lines associated with renewable energy.

The Roadless Rule has never made sense in Alaska. The appropriate balance between protection and development was determined in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conversation Act of 1980. The Forest Service should recognize the challenges the Roadless Rule has created in Alaska and permanently exempt the Tongass and Chugach National Forest from it.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Karl Gohlke'.

Karl Gohlke
Fairbanks, Alaska