

December 16, 2019

Ken Tu, IDT Leader

Alaska Roadless Rule

USAA Forest Service, R-10

P.O. Box 21628

Juneau, Alaska 99802

Re: Proposed Alaska Roadless Rule Exemption

Dear Ken Tu:

I strongly oppose the U.S. Forest Service's current effort to end the Roadless Rule protection for the Tongass National Forest.

The timber industry exited Southeast Alaska many years ago when it was no longer profitable to log the Tongass National Forest. Vast Russian forests combined with cheap labor made it difficult for Alaska lumber companies to compete on the global market especially in Asia which was one of the major markets for Alaska timber exports. Further wood from New Zealand tree plantations captured an ever greater portion of the Asian import market that was once dominated by timber exports from Alaska. (Alaska Economic Trends, December 2003, pp 7-14, Alaska Dept. of Labor and Workforce Development, Frank Murkowski, Alaska Governor).

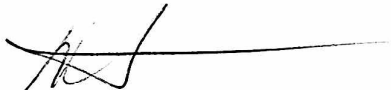
There is now a push to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule which applies to all national forests in the United States. There remains a great interest in logging the last remaining stands of old growth forest in the Tongass and roads are needed to access this resource. For logging companies to achieve profits with current market conditions it requires exempting the Tongass from the Roadless Rule. It also requires taxpayer money to build the roads and subsidize a private industry that employs around 50 people in S.E. Alaska.

The old growth stands in the Tongass are important for more than short term profits for logging companies in S.E. Alaska. These old growth stands provide habitat for

animals and fish that commercial, sport and subsistence users depend on as well as outdoor opportunities for current and future generations to enjoy. These remaining old growth stands are also important for their ability to absorb and contain carbon emissions from the earth's atmosphere which is critical to fighting climate change on our planet.

Please help keep the Tongass National Forest wild and maintain the Roadless Rule for this national forest. I strongly urge the support of Alternative #1: No Action Preferred.

Sincerely,



Deidra Holum

Ketchikan, Alaska 99901