

PUBLIC TESTIMONY BY RICHARD FARNELL
PRESENTED AT THE
JUNEAU COMMUNITY ROADLESS RULE PUBLIC MEETING
HELD: DECEMBER 16, 2019, JUNEAU, ALASKA

SUBMITTED DECEMBER 17, 2019, AS A UNIQUE LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE

RICHARD FARNELL: My name is Richard Farnell, R-I-C-H-A-R-D F-A-R-N-E-L-L, and my zip code 99802.

First of all, I'd like the Forest Service to explain why they're violating my First Amendment rights by not taking testimony from my community that has the majority of citizens in Southeast Alaska, but they will take testimony from very small communities. This is the justification that the U.S. Supreme Court used in approving the Citizens United lawsuit that destroyed American democracy, so I would think that they would at least allow me to testify in my own community. But please provide me with the justification that you're using for that.

Secondly, keep all existing roadless areas in the Tongass in the existing roadless rule for the Tongass. I want all roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest to remain in the current national roadless rule jurisdiction. In other words, Alternative 1.

I've recently made a \$200,000 investment in ability to access roadless areas of the Tongass for hiking, backpacking, trail bike riding, as well as marine-based kayaking and skiffing. These have occurred or will occur on all areas that are currently roadless in the Tongass National Forest. I'm optimistic about my ability to enjoy recreation. I depend on these activities for health and sanity in the era of fake news, continuous lying by the president of the United States and high-level elected officials, and lying by representatives of resource extraction industries to be able to subvert the will of the public.

Secondly, the process being undertaken by the Forest Service and the Citizens Advisory Committee is unnecessary. It subverts the intent of the Tongass Timber Reform Act, the 2006 U.S. District Court ruling against the state control of roadless designations, and the recently revised management provisions of the Tongass Land Management process. The proposed process, as stated in the press release, has the intent to develop a state-specific roadless rule that establishes a land classification system designed to conserve roadless area characteristics in the Tongass National Forest while accommodating timber harvesting and road construction and reconstruction activities determined by the state to be necessary for forest management.

This intent is illegal. The State of Alaska is not responsible for managing lands on the Tongass National Forest; the federal government is. So the entire intent of this process is without legal basis. In addition, the 2006 U.S. District Court ruling on the subject rejected a move to allow states to designate roadless areas on federal lands.

Secondly, the stated goals of conserving roadless area characteristics while accommodating timber harvesting and road construction and reconstruction are in complete conflict with one another, showing that the intent of this process is not clearly thought out.

Fourth, the members chosen for the Citizens Advisory Committee overwhelmingly represent the resource extraction industry and do not include important stakeholder groups who use the forest, such as tourism, hunters, anglers, and backcountry recreationalists. In addition, the scientists who know about the physical and biological health of the forest are also absent from this committee. Therefore, this committee is not representative of forest uses and is inadequate to objectively review proposals for roadless area changes.

Fifth, the choice of the Forest Service of Alternative 6th in the draft roadless rule, full exemption of the Tongass from the 2001 roadless area conservation rule, fails to account for the vital role that the Tongass National Forest plays in carbon sequestration of carbon dioxide from our atmosphere, the major cause of catastrophic climate change, C-3 -- I'm inventing a new term here -- that is occurring to our planet. The ability of forests such as the Tongass to sequester carbon within the body of old-growth forest means that this characteristic of the undisturbed Tongass forest should be given the highest priority over all other users and uses due to the emergency created by CO2-produced climate change.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, IPCC, report of October 2018 maps out four pathways to achieve a 1.5-degree centigrade maximum atmospheric concentration CO2 level. Reforestation is an essential part of all four strategies. Think of all the jobs that the U.S. Forest Service could create with a replanting program in the areas of the Tongass already damaged from commercial logging, and such a program could help to sequester carbon as well.

Finally, I would request, Secretary Perdue, for you to get a proper perspective on the choice that you're making for these alternatives, you need to visit the moon, and you need to look back at earth and get a view of earth as it is right now, because should you continue with the proposal that you've already stated, this planet is no longer going to be viable and inhabitable. And then you can come back home, and you'll have a better perspective.