

PUBLIC TESTIMONY BY ELAINE SCHROEDER
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

ELAINE SCHROEDER: Name is Elaine Schroeder, E-L-A-I-N-E S-C-H-R-O-E-D-E-R. My zip code is 99801.

I'm the co-chair of 350 Juneau, Climate Action for Alaska, which is an affiliate of 350.org, an international organization dedicated to mitigating the climate crisis. Our board supports the retention of the roadless rule, and specifically for its positive impact on carbon sequestration.

According to the DEIS, the Tongass may store an estimated 601 to 650 million U.S. tons of above-ground carbon. This is equivalent to 2.4 billion tons of carbon dioxide. Needless to say, this is a lot of carbon and carbon dioxide equivalents.

Data cited in the DEIS is old, and more recent studies on forest carbon sequestration have not been examined, which is a serious defect of the DEIS. 350 Juneau believes that carbon sequestration needs to be considered as the best use of the Tongass National Forest. Enhanced carbon sequestration is required in light of the October 2018 International Panel on Climate Change report and the November 2018 National Climate Assessment Report. These documents are cited but their stark conclusions are not discussed in the DEIS, which needs to address how the change in the roadless rule would affect carbon sequestration, considering the global need for climate emergency amelioration.

The DEIS also makes no attempt to provide quantitative data on carbon capacity -- past, present, and future. This is a clear failing of the DEIS since it does not present best available data on this topic. In place of actual data, the DEIS launches into inconclusive, discursive discussion that befuddles the obvious fact that removing large quantities of timber from the Tongass National Forest reduces the carbon carrying capacity of this forest.

So given the importance of carbon sinks and carbon storage in the context of global heating, the omission of any of substantive analysis and quantification is unconscionable. The DEIS' discursive discussion obfuscates the effects of timber harvest in the Tongass by refusing to accurately report known and settled science on the role of forests in capturing and restoring carbon. The tone of this document edges on a denial of settled science.

And to reiterate, 350 Juneau supports a No-Action Alternative.

Thanks.