

Please Select the No Action Alternative

Selecting Alternative 6, full exemption, on the issue of the 2001 Roadless Rule is a perpetuation of the ice and rock formula. In this formula, only the land that is seen unfit for "productive use" is off limits for the resource industry. The problem with the formula is that it has completely failed to take into account certain variables and undervalued others, e.g., climate change, ecosystem services, ecotourism, intrinsic value, commercial fishing, guiding, hunting, and fishing. Continuing to make public land management decisions based on this broken formula (i.e., moving forward with the full exemption) is not in the best interest of the owners of this land, the citizens of the United States of America.

Alaska is a place to break the trend and update how we evaluate and make land management decisions on federally managed land. It has been recognized by many and is by no means a secret, Alaska is different. With the vast disparity in the amount of undeveloped public land in Alaska compared to the rest of the union, Alaska is primed to stem the change.

When creating the Final EIS and selecting the alternative, the externalities of issuing an exemption to the 2001 Roadless Rule should be examined in a way that includes the above mentioned variables to their full extent and the sustainable value that can be derived from the landscape when taking these variables into account vs. short-term profit. In doing so, the results will reflect that the greatest good for the greatest number of people is derived from the no action alternative. Pinchot founded the Forest Service to provide working land for the American people, land that would be economic engine for rural America, he just didn't foresee that in some instances that goal would be best achieved void of traditional development.

Choosing the no action alternative is the best economic driver for this part of rural America. As a resident of Southeast Alaska, I know that logging makes up a very small portion of our economy and that the majority of people in Southeast Alaska are ready to put an end to old-growth logging. I also know that every year thousands of tourists come to our towns to see these roadless areas. They take them in via hunting and fishing trips, flight and boat tours, and adventure cruises, to name a few. As a local I enjoy the roadless areas as well and support the economy via yearly floatplane charters into these roadless areas, to experience what it is like to be in such wonderful country devoid of roads. Exempting the Tongass may have large dollar signs attached because big industry is chopping to change the forest plan as well and start cutting and digging, but the majority of the money will not go towards working class rural Americans.

The best economic choice for all Americans and especially for Alaskans is the no action alternative. This alternative leaves us with a forest that is providing ecosystem services, that are overlooked and undervalued in the draft EIS, with no input whatsoever required. Also it is what the people want, the majority of comments the USFS has received to date support the no action alternative.

Choose the no action alternative and do not let the shortsighted people in the Alaska state government push through a land management decision that will only benefit a small percentage of the population, while diminishing the sustainable economic drivers derived from the forest.