



September 17, 2024

United States Forest Service
Director, Ecosystem Management Coordination
201 14th Street SW, Mailstop 1108
Washington, DC 20250-1124
Via USDA comment link

Re: National Old Growth Amendment/Tongass National Forest

To the USFS:

Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) is a federally recognized Tribal government serving over 6,000 tribal citizens in Ketchikan, Alaska. KIC's mission is to enhance and protect the interests of the Tribe and its Tribal citizens, to assist our Tribal members in becoming economically self-sufficient through the provisions of socioeconomic services, to enrich and uphold our cultural heritage and traditional way of life.

Our traditional homelands have nourished our community since time immemorial and our cultural and economic livelihoods depend on a balanced relationship with our natural surroundings, including the Tongass National Forest. KIC and the community of Ketchikan recognize the lasting detrimental impacts of commercial logging, as we have been developing restoration projects to heal the land from prior activities. We wish to prevent the need for additional restoration work and leave the forest better off for future generations.

Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC) therefore supports the protection of old-growth in the Tongass National Forest.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) has a trust responsibility to protect lands, assets, and resources on behalf of Tribal Nations. To uphold this trust responsibility, KIC encourages USFS to develop an old growth forest management system that has clear and concise metrics that will not allow for large scale commercial logging. The remaining old growth must be maintained to support ecosystems services and climate change resiliency while also allowing Tribal communities to have access for traditional cultural uses.

KIC retains the right to request official consultation on this issue at any time.

Sincerely,

Norman Skan, President
Ketchikan Indian Community