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First name: Mary

Last name: Greene

Organization: National Wildlife Federation

Title: Public Lands Attorney

Comments: The following text was copy/pasted from an attached letter. The system cannot display the formatting, graphics, or tables from the attached original.

Honorable Sonny Perdue October 23, 2019 Secretary of Agriculture

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Ave., S.W.

Washington, DC 20250

Re: Request for Additional Public Meetings and 120-day Comment Period for Alaska Roadless Rulemaking Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)

Dear Secretary Perdue:

The National Wildlife Federation requests a minimum 60-day public comment period for the forthcoming draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on a proposed state-specific rule for management of inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest.

The Tongass National Forest is globally renowned for its extraordinary temperate rainforests, stunning scenery, abundant salmon populations, and superlative wildlands. During the scoping process for the Alaska roadless rulemaking, members of the public expressed overwhelming opposition to removing protection of the Tongass roadless areas, and the scientific community has repeatedly supported including the Tongass in the nation's roadless area conservation commitments.

Sixty days is simply not enough to respond to the DEIS. The public will not have an adequate opportunity to examine and comment on the DEIS if the Forest Service follows through on its plan to allow just 60 days for public comment. Additional time is needed to review, analyze, and inform the public about the Forest Service's proposed changes to the Roadless Rule. The proposed rule could drastically impact some of the nation's greatest forests and wildlands, subsistence values, indigenous communities, and the thriving recreation and tourism economy. The Forest Service has provided 120-day comment periods for forest planning processes covering much less national forest land than the Tongass roadless areas, such as the DEIS for the Flathead National Forest plan revision in Montana. In Alaska, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently extended to 120

days the comment period on the DEIS for the Pebble Mine.

Accordingly, we respectfully request that the Forest Service provide additional public hearings and a public comment period of at least 120 days during the DEIS review and commenting process.

Sincerely,

Mary Greene

National Wildlife Federation

Public Lands Attorney

Denver, Colorado 80203

Cc: Chris French, deputy chief, USDA Forest Service

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