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First name: Jacob

Last name: Pries

Organization: Quality Deer Management Association

Title:

Comments: Public Comment for Tongass National Forest 2001 Roadless Rule Exemption

To Whom It May Concern:

I hope this email finds you doing well. On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association, we would like to state our opposition to the proposed exemption to the 2001 Roadless Rule for Tongass National Forest. Attached is our public comment outlining our position in full. Your consideration to this matter is greatly appreciated. I have cc'ed the Director of Conservation at the Quality Deer Management Association in this correspondence. Please reach out with any questions.

Respectfully,

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

QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

[bull] Bogart, GA 30622

Date: 17 October 2019

To: United States Department of Agriculture

From: Jacob Pries, Policy Intern

Re: Opposition to Proposed 2001 Roadless Rule Exemption

On behalf of the Quality Deer Management Association we would like to state our opposition to the proposed roadless rule exemption for the Tongass National Forest, removing conservation safeguards for \$9.2 million acres of roadless public lands in the Tongass National Forest. The QDMA is a national nonprofit wildlife conservation organization dedicated to ensuring the future of white-tailed deer, wildlife habitat and our hunting heritage. Founded in 1988, the QDMA has over 60,000 members nationwide and our membership includes hunters, landowners and natural resource professionals.

The Tongass National Forest is one of the country's greatest national treasures. It is home to many indescribable scenic views and a vast number of valuable species. Sportsmen and women have enjoyed the backcountry experience this place has to offer for generations. The decision to upend collaborative efforts by the state to manage this forest is against the interests of all Americans. This public land is to be managed in the best interests of its users, the American people who own it. The rash decisions to rollback conservation protections on some of the greatest backcountry areas this country has to offer are inexcusable. While we believe in proper management of our forest, we do not believe in unnecessarily exploiting our forests and diminishing critical habitat. We recognize the crucial balance of multiple use lands, but we request maximum consideration be given to the conservation of these valuable resources and habitat. This is important so that the next generation has the opportunity to enjoy these lands as we have been fortunate enough to do so. By choosing the most extreme option of removing Tongass National Forest from the 2001 roadless rule, you are neglecting to work towards this balance.

The sportsmen and women who flock to this area for the backcountry experience are being undermined by the full exemption from the 2001 roadless rule. These sportsmen and women are a vital contributor to the state's economy and to conservation. According to the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, sportsmen and women contribute \$1.16 billion to the state's economy supporting 15,942 jobs. They're stake in this decision is too large to ignore and the Tongass National Forest is too important not to protect. We are imploring you to put the interests of the current and next generation of Americans first and reject this option as we search for a more sustainable solution. We need responsible forest management and collaboration to ensure the preservation of wildlife habitat, and our hunting heritage for years to come. The upcoming generations of sportsmen and women depend on you to conserve this national treasure. On behalf of the QDMA, we would like to thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

Respectfully,

Jacob Pries Policy Intern Quality Deer Management Association

[Attachment is not related to the rule and is part of a signature block]

[Position]