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First name: Jon
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Organization: SITKA FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Title: Chairman of the ADFG Sitka Advisory Committee
Comments: SITKA FISH & GAME ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RESOLUTION NO. 2019-2

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE 2001 ROADLESS RULE / IN SUPPORT OF ALTERNATIVE 1 IN THE ALASKA ROADLESS RULE-MAKING PROCESS

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

WHEREAS, the local Advisory Committees were established to promote and protect the

common interest of Alaska's fishery and wildlife resources, which is a vital component of Alaska's social, economic, and ecological well-being; and

WHEREAS, the Sitka Advisory Committee represents the voices of fish and wildlife users based in Sitka and is made up of representatives from the following stakeholder groups: hand

trollers, subsistence resource users, hunting, seining, longliners, power trollers, conservation,

trapping, charter guides, resident sport fishermen, processors, hunting guides, and shellfish fishermen; and

WHEREAS, the inventoried Roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest conserve natural diversity, serve as a bulwark against the spread of invasive species, protect healthy watersheds, provide climate change resilience, and help ensure the continued production of

native species of fish and wildlife that rural communities and tribal citizens rely on for food, economic livelihood, and cultural identity; and

WHEREAS, the community of Sitka and the various stakeholder groups on the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee benefit greatly from fish and wildlife populations that are supported by the inventoried Roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, many Sitka residents obtain their livelihoods from economic activities including tourism and commercial fishing, which are highly dependent on a pristine and productive natural setting; and

WHEREAS, the local use area of Sitkans for fish and wildlife harvesting and guiding include the inventoried Roadless areas of Middle Kruzof Island, Chichagof Island lands bordering Hoonah Sound, Poison Cove and Ushk Bay, Salmon Lake, Kizuchia Creek, Nakwasina Sound, Fish Bay, Lake Eva, and Hanus Bay, which would all lose their Roadless protections under the proposed full exemption alternative; and

WHEREAS, salmon and other marine resource populations are facing increased challenges from changing ocean conditions, climate change, ocean acidification, rising water temperatures in streams, and ocean warming events in the Pacific Ocean, and freshwater habitat development in the contiguous United States; and

WHEREAS, Sitka black-tail deer populations are an important subsistence resource for community members that depend on the intact, old-growth forests and the large canopy they support for winter habitat; and

WHEREAS, inventoried Roadless areas support healthy fish and wildlife habitat and protect some of Sitka's highly productive streams and original intact forest areas that were not logged by the pulp mills; and

WHEREAS, Roadless areas on the Tongass are essential to Southeast Alaska's way of life and represent some of the most spectacular and unique Roadless areas anywhere in the National Forest System and support hunting, fishing, customary and traditional uses, unparalleled outdoor recreation opportunities, and opportunities for businesses; and

WHEREAS, the amount of carbon stored in the intact old-growth forests and soils of the Tongass National Forest represent one of the highest carbon stores in the world, and the conservation of intact Roadless areas and old growth forests on the Tongass are essential for maintaining local and national climate resilience and slowing down climate change throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the Tongass provides a wide range of ecosystem services beyond carbon sequestration to residents and visitors alike on a 24/7 basis naturally and at no cost to the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, increased logging of old-growth forests in the existing Roadless areas of the Tongass would seriously impact the ability of the forest to provide these vital ecosystem services, such as clean water, clean air, stream temperature regulation, and healthy salmon and wildlife habitat; and

WHEREAS, the commercial fishing industry and visitor industries that provide the economic backbone of Southeast Alaska depend on pristine, scenic vistas and healthy, productive watersheds; and

WHEREAS, opening up Roadless areas for future development industrial-scale logging will actively work against the Tongass Transition and the 2016 Tongass Land Management Plan Amendment, which was created after years of collaborative work between a diverse group of stakeholders; and

WHEREAS, during the scoping process for the Alaska Specific Roadless Rulemaking process that was initiated by the Secretary of Agriculture in August 2018, Sitka and other communities throughout Southeast Alaska spoke out in strong support of the 2001 Roadless Rule, along with over 90% of the official scoping comments received strongly in support of maintaining the 2001 Roadless Rule on the Tongass National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska invested time, staff, and money to convene a stakeholder-led Citizen Advisory Committee in 2018 that provided recommendations and perspectives from different interest groups in Southeast Alaska on what a workable compromise for an Alaska Roadless Rule could look like; and

WHEREAS, the proposed alternative of the Forest Service for a full exemption from the 2001 Roadless Rule goes contrary to public opinion, the recommendations put forward by the Citizen Advisory Committee, the input from tribal governments, and input from local commercial fishermen and guides; and

WHEREAS, the draft environmental impact statement does not sufficiently analyze the potential impacts to fish and wildlife populations or reductions in carbon sequestration and increased occurrence of climate change-driven events that would result from increased ground disturbance activities that would become possible following a full exemption from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that given long-lasting, fiscally irresponsible, and environmentally damaging

impacts of any reduction in current Roadless Rule protections on the Tongass, the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee strongly supports lasting protection for all inventoried Roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest as provided for in the 2001 Roadless Rule; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the economic livelihoods and subsistence harvesting of Sitka residents would be irreparably harmed by the effects of a full exemption from the Roadless Rule on the Tongass, which would lead to increased climate change, increased threats to fish habitat, and development occurring in pristine natural areas that contribute to the tourism potential and natural beauty of the Tongass National Forest; and

THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee encourages the USFS to invest in programs, workforce development, and employment opportunities for Southeast Alaskan residents to restore the health and productivity of the Tongass National Forest's degraded watersheds and streams, as a means of supporting vital ecosystem services and economic opportunities such as carbon sequestration, small-scale selective timber harvest, fish and wildlife populations, natural vistas, visitor amenities, subsistence, hydrological resources, and more; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee asks that the Forest Service and Secretary of Agriculture adopt Alternative 1 [mdash]the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE--and keep the 2001 Roadless Rule in place on the Tongass National Forest.

CERTIFICATION:

PASSED and APPROVED by the Sitka Fish and Game Advisory Committee this 13th day of November, 2019.

[Image of signature]

Jon martin, Chair, Sitka Fish & Game Advisory Committee

[Image of Date] Date

Attested:

[Image of Notary Public Stamp]

[Image of Signature]

Date [Image of Date]

[Position]