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First name: Michelle

Last name: Dutro

Organization:

Title:

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

Dear Secretary Perdue,

My name is Michelle Dutro and I'm writing to you from Wrangell, Alaska to urge you to choose no action and keep the Tongass National Forest subject to the Roadless Rule.

The town of Wrangell is located on Wrangell Island in the SE Alaska panhandle. It's a remote community, home to about 2,000 people this time of year, and most of the people and families who live here rely on the land for subsistence, just like you did growing up on the family farm in Georgia. It's a lifestyle that connects us to the land in a way many Americans no longer experience. It is a lifestyle to be treasured and fought for, which is why I'm writing to you now.

Your father said, "We're all stewards of the land, owned or rented, and our responsibility is to leave it better than we found it."

Your choice regarding the Roadless Rule in Alaska will either allow you to live up to your father's values, or fall short. Because revoking Roadless will only allow continued degradation of the land.

I understand that your main guiding principle going forward as you lead our country as the Secretary of Agriculture, is to create jobs in agriculture and agribusiness and produce and sell the foods and fiber that help feed and clothe the world. I can see how opening up acreage in the Tongass National Forest to the construction of new logging roads may seem like an opportunity to create jobs in the logging industry — a sector that has suffered here in Alaska since the 1990 Tongass Timber Reform Act, signed into law by President George HW Bush.

Many people would say that these increased protections sounded the death knell of the logging industry here in Alaska. But the TTRA also immeasurably helped ensure that we still have some old growth stands. I see evidence of logging everywhere I go in South East Alaska. And I don't want to see more.

Like many people in Wrangell, I work in the tourism industry, the second largest economy in the state. Every day,

when I take clients to explore and experience the majesty of the Tongass [ndash] the crown jewel of our National Forests that some call America[rsquo]s Amazon [ndash] my clients see the havoc wreaked on the land by logging. They see the clear cuts, they ask where the old growth trees are, they ask how this affects the wildlife and Alaska Natives. And when I tell them the history of logging in the area, they are disheartened. They ask why our government doesn[rsquo]t show more respect for the land and our natural resources through improved management. Overall [ndash] the state of our forests here is a bad look for America. It is very difficult to be proud to live on this great land when our government chooses to extract resources excessively and neglects our basic duties of stewardship.

Continued construction of more roads will contribute to more logging [ndash] if not an increase in board feet output, then over a larger area. If the intent is not to increase logging (as some within the Forest Service have claimed during public forums), then the argument that ending the Roadless Rule in Alaska will create jobs makes no sense. You can[rsquo]t have it both ways. You are trying to support an industry that is already dead.

Another of your guiding principles is to ensure food security. I[rsquo]m sure you know how heavily Alaskan[rsquo]s rely on Salmon. As I write to you now, my pressure canner is running in the background as I preserve smoked sockeye salmon for the winter. Our forests are critical to providing nutrients and suitable habitat for our struggling salmon population. Removal of the Roadless Rule opens up the possibility of more logging that would further degrade salmon habitat. Our salmon are already vulnerable, and we need to protect them so we can continue to put food on the table here in Alaska, and around the world.

The forests you would open to logging by exempting Alaska from the Roadless Rule are my backyard. They[rsquo]re America[rsquo]s backyard. That[rsquo]s the beauty of public lands. Continued protection means increased food security and can ensure job security in tourism and the fishing industry [ndash] two industries that have much more economic value and promise than the logging industry does.

Please choose to respect and protect our public lands by selecting [lsquo]no action[rsquo] on the Roadless Rule in Alaska.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michelle Dutro

[Position]

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Michelle Dutro

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