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First name: Stephanie

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: testimony opposing Full Exemption

Please see attached

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

My name is Kasy yah gei, Ernestine Hanlon Abel. I am Tlingit, Raven Dog Salmon, and my family has been in the Tongass Forest from the beginning of time. I have been weaving spruce root baskets for 40 years. I also do Chilkat weaving. I am wearing a spruce root hat and a Chilkat apron that I wove. I am a member of the Women's Earth and Climate Action Network, WECAN International. We are 15% population of 17 million acres of wild and nationally-owned country in S.E. Alaska. As a part of the ecosystem, I eat, drink and breathe from the land, air and water around me. Our way of living is the best, hunting, fishing and plant gathering has provided well for us. The trees in the forest have witnessed generations of my grandparents hunt, fish and thrive off of this land.

Today, we know that the U.S.F.S. is not "Smokey the Bear" here to protect the forest. Imagine how we feel seeing our own Alaska congressional delegation undermine our existence — once again — as well as Alaska's governor and the White House.

In the 1980-90s we faced additional negative impacts from the clear cut logging industry that began in the 1950s, it was a boom and bust approach that we were helpless against. Picking berries is a hazard; bears are confused coming into the community to be killed by the cops; mountain goats have been seen in neighborhoods. The water for salmon has warmed to the point of fish dying off before they can spawn and fertilize the next generation. The tides have risen to the point the Alaska marine ferries cannot land at terminals because the tides are too high to allow the ramps to function. Our weather patterns have changed; we no longer have four seasons. This summer was extremely hot; the mountains were bare of snow, something we have never seen before. Forest Service maps show the yellow cedar trees that died on our Chichagof Island — a tree that is our "canary".

Repeating Tlingit & Haida President Richard Peterson, we cannot help but believe that the entire federal process has repeatedly disrespected and ignored tribal sovereign input. For example, the U.S.D.A has compensated the Alaska Forest Association and timber industry lobbyist group with \$200,000 for their time and "expertise" on engaging in the ROADLESS Rule process. The State of Alaska received \$2,000,000! And yet despite Tribal and Indigenous representation of our village communities embedded within the Tongass Forest, we received nothing — no compensation for our participation in this same process.

Much of the homes in Hoonah are substandard. We have witnessed the "boom and bust" of the logging industry. Between 2005-2018, tax payers have subsidized the timber industry on the average of \$12.5 million; receiving back only \$1.1 million in revenue from timber sales. Nothing will replace the trees that have been cut down in mass. Only standing trees are a forest. The Amazon Forest was the largest carbon sequester of the world. The devastating man-made forest fires this summer in S. America have dramatically changed that,

making the Tongass temperate rain forest more important than ever to this earth, and must now be seen as such.

Secretary Perdue, keep the 2001 National ROADLESS RULE intact, and do not allow a weakened exception for Alaska's Tongass National Forest. This RULE will allow the areas that have been logged a time to heal, but the healing has just begun. I support the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE so that we will continue to be protected from more resource extraction.

Thank you, the tribal governments of Kake, Hoonah, Hydaburg, Kasaan, Angoon, and Tlingit & Haida Tribes of S.E. Alaska, and the N. W. Coast Affiliated Tribes, for speaking up against the weakening of the 2001 ROADLESS RULE. Tenakee Springs Conservation group and Skagway, we appreciate you too. We are thankful for the S.E. Long Line Association's support with more than 220 fishermen's signatures. Thank you SEACC, Earth Justice, and Green Peace for your hard hitting support. In 2018, 143,900 people commented to the U.S.F.S.'s [scoping process] on the ROADLESS RULE, a majority of which opposed any changes to weakening it, same as for this [comment period]. The people are speaking in mass and must not be ignored.

We stand in solidarity with the Tongass WECAN delegation testifying today in Washington, D.C. We seek our indigenous sovereign voices at the planning tables [ndash] for the first time in history. This is a matter of mitigation, our place at the planning table. When our grandchildren come into the forest, the trees will witness their presence, as will their grandchildren. This is our vision.

Gunal'scheech! Thank you for hearing me out.

Before any logging, I could harvest spruce roots close to home. I need an old growth canopy to get the proper spruce roots for baskets.

The areas where I harvest roots have been getting drier each year.

The moss used to be a really thick carpet, but I have witnessed it getting thinner each year until now under the canopy it is often gone and there is different vegetation.

Even areas away from the clearcuts could feel the distress from the trees. When a tree is in distress, nearby healthy trees send out healer or medicine roots which have tiny hair-like growth shooting off from the main root. Thirty to 40 years ago, it was rare to see a medicine root. I was taught to not harvest medicine roots so that they could heal the other trees. Since the massive logging around here, I see a lot more medicine roots, even miles away from the cuts.

There are also no more areas where I can harvest grass for the designs I place on my baskets. I need to harvest where people don't walk. The forest service brought in tall, invasive grass, planted it around town and out the logging roads. Indeed it did invade.

To harvest roots, grass, and other materials, we relied on all 4 seasons of the year. When the snow melted and the ground thawed, we could harvest the roots.

The weather patterns and massive clearcuts made the ground drier which means that the spruce roots have a lot more pitch to deal with. Cleaning the roots is harder on your hands and the pitch makes splitting the roots more difficult. Drier roots are not as pliable as they used to be.

I use yellow cedar to spin with mountain goat wool for my warp for Chilkat weaving. Now Chichagof Island we have massive stands of dead yellow cedar which appear on the maps in the forest service office. Alarming, this is our canary for global warming.

But I do not need to point to the map of the Roadless Areas to show you how I will be affected. Any one area cut will affect the others still standing because it impacts the entire surrounding ecosystem [ndash] a domino effect.

I use mountain goat wool. This summer there were 2 sightings of mountain goats, one on the beach in Ketchikan and one in a neighborhood in Sitka. Goats never come down to sea level in the summertime. They are receiving wrong signals.

[Position]