

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 12/16/2019 9:00:00 AM

First name: Laura

Last name: Buckmaster

Organization: Washington Wild

Title:

Comments: Alaska Roadless Rulemaking #54511

Please receive the following on behalf of 39 breweries, brew pubs and maltsters in Washington State.

Sincerely,

Laura Buckmaster

Laura Buckmaster, Program Manager

(She/Her)

WASHINGTON WILD

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

December 11, 2019

Ken Tu

Interdisciplinary Team Leader

Alaska Roadless Rule

USDA Forest Service

P.O. Box 21628

Juneau, Alaska 99802-1628

Submitted electronically to [www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54511](http://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54511)

Dear Mr. Tu,

On behalf of the Washington brewing and malting community, we write to support the No-Action Alternative for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the proposed Alaska Roadless Rule. Granting Alaska an exemption for the Roadless Rule would set a dangerous precedent that could lead to excessive logging and road construction in wild forests across the United States that are critical sources for clean water.

As breweries, brewpubs, hop growers, and maltsters, we understand the incredible value in protecting our national forests as sources for clean water. Water is the number one ingredient in beer, a growing economic force here in Washington. The Washington craft brewing economy accounts for \$9 billion annually, is a driving force for tourism and economic development in both small and large communities and employs over 6,000

people. Additionally, Washington produces 75% of our nation's hops, contributing greatly to the national beer economy of \$328 billion. Without access to clean water, our entire industry wouldn't exist. In many cases, the source of municipal water stems from headwaters

located in our national forest roadless areas, the same ones that would be affected if the Roadless Rule was eliminated.

Since 2001 the Roadless Rule has established itself as a bedrock conservation protection for our national forests. Originally intended to safeguard more than 58 million acres, the Roadless Rule limits costly and environmentally damaging roadbuilding and logging, helps protect taxpayers, and preserves wild, relatively intact roadless landscapes across the National Forest System. By protecting high value conservation lands, the Roadless Rule provides numerous benefits including protecting clean and safe drinking water, supporting world class and local outdoor recreation opportunities, and protecting wildlife habitat that supports many threatened, endangered and sensitive species. National forest roadless areas are especially prized for the clean water they supply to communities, as more than 60 million Americans get their drinking water from national forests.

Furthermore, Alaska's Tongass National Forest contains some of the largest remaining tracts of temperate old-growth rainforest in the world, helping make it the country's single most important national forest for carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation. Given that parts of Alaska are warming at roughly twice the rate of the rest of the planet, maintaining an intact Tongass ecosystem, including continued protections for roadless areas, can help provide climate change solutions for Alaska and support international climate efforts. As business owners, we understand the need to invest in the protection of reliable and clean water as well as supporting the overall health of the environment we all share.

The Roadless Rule was the product of more than two years of deliberation, more than one million public comments, and over 600 public meetings. Of the comments received, 95% voiced support for strong roadless area protections. Now in seeking to eliminate protections, zero public meetings have been scheduled in the lower 48 states. These are public lands for all Americans, and the decisions made in the Tongass could affect Washington next. Nearly 2 million acres in Washington State are protected under the Roadless Rule, including South Quinault Ridge in the Olympic National Forest, the Dark Divide in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest, and Lena Lake in the Olympic National Forest - all magnificent places that shape our legacy as a wild and green state. We know that these sweeping "exemptions" to the Roadless Rule will not stop with Alaska. Others will follow, as Utah already has expressed intent to do.

We would like to again state our strong opposition to any changes to the Roadless Rule in Alaska or elsewhere. As small business owners who rely on clean water, value water security, and value great tasting beer, we urge you to maintain the Roadless Rule and its vital protections for the National Forest System and the Tongass.

[Position]