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Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

I was recently informed about the possible decision to remove logging protections from the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. I wanted to submit a comment, or rather, plea, in an effort to dissuade this decision.

I do not live in Alaska, but the great state of Kentucky. However, both states share exuberant natural beauty. I have seen how damaging practices such as logging and mining can be to nature. We inherited this land from our ancestors. Looking back in history, we can see how poor industry practices have effected not only the land, but the people on the land.

Take the photos often seen of settlers coming into the now states California, Oregon, and Washington for the first time and encountering unspoiled forests. Some of the trees therein were possibly, and even likely, thousands of years old. What did they do when they saw such wonder? They proceeded to cut down the trees of old, hunt the animals, and raze the area.

Even looking to the time of the great expansion west in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, photo evidence exists of prairie-men slaughtering Bison by the thousands.

To mention a final example, though many, many others exist, think more recently of the British Petroleum (BP) oil tragedy in the Gulf Coast region of the U.S. Not only was the wildlife of that area effected dramatically, but so were the people, the citizens of this country.

Even the Federal Government is still stepping in, nearly ten years later. An article from Houston Public Media stated that nearly \$226 million has been approved to "...restore marine habitats in the Gulf Of Mexico after [the] 2010 BP Oil Spill."

While it is true that the oil spill was an industrial accident, the cost of the accident, especially in terms of human life, and in the case of wildlife, is simply too high to pay again.

Logging and the creation of new logging roads may not have the same impact as an oil spill, but there is still great environmental cost. Natural ecosystems and beauty cannot be recovered in a small amount of time. It can take decades, or even centuries for area to fully recovery from the price of polluting and destructive industry.

I highly recommend reading an article posted in the Seattle Times on December 6th, 2019 by Elsa M. Sebastian and Marina Anderson. These two women are reportedly from the area in question and shed real light on the situation that should be looked at thoroughly before any action is taken.

Climate Change is also an important factor that CANNOT be overlooked. In the Seattle Times article mentioned above, the two authors state, "We have a responsibility to protect ancient forests as natural buffers against climate change, and the Tongass is the largest carbon sink in our national forest system."

I know the current administration is skeptical of Climate Change. I used to be of this mindset until I started to look at why I believed the way I did. I started to listen to the other side of the argument and to make up my own mind. The conclusion I arrived at was sobering, since I had been denying it all along. Climate Change is happening, and we must do something about it.

Allowing the creation of logging roads and the exploitation of the Tongass Forest would be a grievous leap in the wrong direction. Even NASA's web page on climate Change states, "Multiple studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals[1] show that 97 percent or more of actively publishing climate scientists agree\*: Climate-warming trends over the past century are extremely likely due to human activities. In addition, most of the leading scientific organizations worldwide have issued public statements endorsing this position."

We must conserve what unspoiled nature we have. We can even look to our own governmental past of an example of how conservationist was once highly regarded. Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth president of the United States, may have been one of the first to really get the ball rolling. The National Parks website states, "The conservation legacy of Theodore Roosevelt is found in the 230 million acres of public lands he helped establish during his presidency. Much of that land - 150 millions acres - was set aside as national forests... The idea was to conserve forests for continued use. An adamant proponent of utilizing the country's resources, Roosevelt wanted to insure the sustainability of those resources."

So, I ask you, whoever is reading this long, albeit passionate, plea, look to the younger children that you know. It could be nephews or nieces, cousins, family friends, or even your own children. Ask yourself what world we will leave them. Ask yourself what it is they may never have the opportunity to see or experience of nature, because we thought industry was a higher priority over a cleaner, safer, more beautiful world.

I leave you with this proverb: A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.

[See attachment containing an image of a man cleaning up oil spill]

[See attachment containing an image of large pile of bison skulls]

[See attachment containing an image of large tree cut down]

[See attachment containing an image of man standing on a moutainside]

[attachment contains the following link: <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/save-the-rare-wild-beauty-of-the-tongass-national-forest-from-renewed-logging/>]

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