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First name: Tracy

Last name: Welch

Organization: United Fishermen of Alaska

Title: Executive Director

Comments:

February 24, 2025

Tongass National Forest Supervisor's Office
Attn: Erin Mathews, Revision Plan Coordinator
648 Mission Street, Suite 110
Ketchikan, AK 99901

RE: Tongass Land Management Plan- Draft Assessment

Dear Ms. Mathews,

United Fishermen of Alaska (UFA) is the statewide commercial fishing trade association representing 35 commercial fishing organizations participating in fisheries throughout the state and the federal fisheries off Alaska's coast. UFA has reviewed the U.S. Forest Service (Forest Service) Tongass Land Management Plan (TLMP) revision, Tongass Draft Assessment. The assessment appears comprehensive, and mostly adequate from the commercial fishing industry perspective.

Before and during the plan development phase of the Tongass National Forest Land Management Plan revision, UFA asks that all current salmon habitat, stream classifications, restorations, enhancements and protections be maintained. We urge the Forest Service not to alter or weaken the Tongass Timber Reform Act, and State of Alaska Air and Water Quality Standards.

We advise the Forest Service to maintain all existing language surrounding water quality, timber harvest, stream designations and riparian zone protection.

Chiefly, we ask the Forest Service to safeguard our fishing industry use of harbors and safe anchorages, near shore commercial fisheries, shellfish pot storages, aids to navigation, communication and weather forecast data sites, and permit agency and private non-profit salmon hatchery efforts in the Tongass including Wilderness waters.

We seek to magnify, maintain, and safeguard all elements of the TLMP that benefit Alaska's commercial fishing industry traditional historic connection to the Tongass.

We ask that the team responders for the plan development phase of the forest plan revision give expedient notice of all requested or suggested alterations of the existing TLMP to the public.

Regards,

Matt Alward Tracy Welch
President Executive Director

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Bering Sea Crabbers * Alaska Longline Fishermen's Association * Alaska Scallop Association * Alaska Trollers Association

Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association * Area M Seiners Association * At-sea Processors Association

Bristol Bay Regional Seafood Development Association * Bristol Bay Reserve * Cape Barnabas, Inc. *

Concerned Area "M" Fishermen

Cook Inlet Aquaculture Association * Cordova District Fishermen United * Douglas Island Pink and Chum *

Freezer Longline Coalition

Fishing Vessel Owners Assn * Groundfish Forum * Kodiak Crab Alliance Cooperative * Kodiak Regional Aquaculture Association

Kodiak Seiners Association * North Pacific Fisheries Association * Northern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association

Northwest Setnetters Association * Petersburg Vessel Owners Association * Prince William Sound Aquaculture Corporation

Purse Seine Vessel Owner Association * Seafood Producers Cooperative * Southeast Alaska Herring Conservation Alliance

Southeast Alaska Fisherman's Alliance * Southeast Alaska Regional Dive Fisheries Association * Southeast Alaska Seiners

Southern Southeast Regional Aquaculture Association * United Catcher Boats * United Southeast Alaska Gillnetters

Valdez Fisheries Development Association