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Comments: To the U.S. Forest Service:

I strenuously object to the proposal to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule. The Roadless Rule was passed by the U.S. Congress and signed by the President. It is the rule of law. The State of Alaska, which clearly cares more about exploiting its resources than conserving them, then petitioned to exempt the Tongass. This exemption was then subjected to layers of court decisions, with the result being that the Tongass should remain protected by the Roadless Rule law.

Now the USDA Forest Service seeks to arbitrarily remove this protection in a particular national forest, again, the Tongass. You cannot simply make exceptions to laws every time you don't like something. If ever there were ANY national forest in the United States that deserves complete protection of its current roadless areas, it is the Tongass above all.

We are in a global crisis, actually two of them. We are in a global climate crisis and we are in a global extinction crisis. Cutting trees in the Tongass and building roads in its roadless areas will exacerbate both of these crises. It is so obvious, and I am appalled that the Forest Service is even considering this ill-advised proposal. Clearly, it is driven by ideologues in the Trump administration.

In addition to wolves, moose, and bears, to name a few important mammal species that call this forest home, the Tongass hosts exceptional birds, including the Prince of Wales spruce grouse and the Queen Charlotte goshawk, a subspecies of northern goshawk found in southeast Alaska and coastal British Columbia that hunts and breeds exclusively in old-growth forests. The marbled murrelet-a seabird that nests in tufts of moss found on massive limbs of large coastal trees and is considered endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List-also finds refuge here. Cutting the old-growth woods and building roads where these creatures live fragments their habitat, which can affect breeding success for some species.

The Tongass is the world's largest temperate rainforest. We need more of this forest, not less, to help sequester carbon. Logging here will release copious quantities of carbon into the atmosphere. Have you seen what's happening in Brazil, to the rainforest? Why do you want to add to this problem?

Every summer now, Alaska is on fire. Millions and millions of acres are burning. The same is happening in British Columbia. We are losing millions of acres of forests. We do not need to cut the Tongass just so people can make money off the spectacular trees that grow in the Tongass National Forest. This great, primeval forest should be left intact for future generations. Shame on you for even considering this proposal.

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