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Organization:

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Comments: Regarding the Exemption of the Tongass National Forest roadless areas from the Alaska Roadless Rule:

Although not a resident of Alaska, my brother lived in Alyeska for many years and I and others in my extended family made many trips to Alaska over those years. Of the many places we visited the Tongass and Chugach National Forests for extended back country camping and hiking. The roadless areas provided some of the most memorable experiences we encountered during those visits. By way of contrast, the road areas although they provided initial access clearly showed that once roads are allowed they notably impact the environment with legal and illegal logging and mining, illegal dumping, off-road-vehicle (4 wheel and dirt bike) impacts, and legal and illegal hunting, trapping, and fishing. Over the years we encountered all of the above in both forests. Given the remoteness of these areas, the USDA cannot adequately patrol them to ensure that negative impacts associated with both legal and illegal activities such as those above do not occur. Roads make all of the above simply likely to occur. Once established they also simply make way for the ultimate "use" rather than protection of these wildland areas. They also simply increase the likelihood of wildland fires in areas where controlling those fires essentially becomes impossible. For all of the above reasons I strongly oppose the Tongass National Forest exemption from the Alaska Road Rule.

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