

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 10/20/2019 8:00:00 AM

First name: Randy

Last name: Filipic

Organization:

Title:

Comments: The Tongass, America's largest and wildest national forest, draws outdoor adventurers, boaters, birders, hunters, and anglers. An intact Tongass supports a robust Southeast Alaskan economy through tourism, commercial and sport fishing, and small businesses. Its old-growth trees provide irreplaceable wildlife habitat for myriad species including wild Pacific salmon, Alexander Archipelago wolves, and Sitka black-tailed deer.

The Trump administration wants to do the opposite and lay waste to some of our country's most unspoiled wildlands that absorb massive amounts of carbon. The Tongass National Forest stores more carbon removed from the atmosphere than any other national forest in the country. Alaska's elected officials are selling out their constituents and robbing future generations by trying to strip protections from one of the most pristine old-growth forests in the world. It's wrong to put private profits ahead of the health and future of Alaskans.

I ask that you do not repeal the Roadless Rule protections across more than nine million acres of the Tongass, dangerously weakening this national standard by enabling logging interests to bulldoze roads and clear-cut trees in areas of the Tongass that have been off-limits for decades. The rule continues to receive overwhelming support in Alaska and across the nation. Recent polling shows that 61 percent of voters nationwide oppose exempting large parts of the Tongass from the protections of the Roadless Rule. In Southeast Alaska, 60 percent support keeping the Roadless Rule in place, more than twice as many as those who support a Tongass exemption.

[Position]

[Position]