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Comments: The Tongass Forest is pristine wilderness and old growth rainforest. This attack gravely threatens one of the planet's truly exceptional landscapes and it could trigger a wave of similar Roadless Rule exemptions that collectively declare open season on the nation's few relatively untouched and untamed forests.

The Tongass is the biggest national forest in the U.S. and arguably one of the biggest tools in our arsenal to confront climate change. It seems that our shortsighted politicians think that humanity can survive without nature. The Tongass It stores more carbon than any other national forest and is likely one of the most productive carbon-trapping forests on Earth. Encouraging more logging would not only blunt that secret weapon, but make the Tongass a part of the problem instead; when forests are logged, the carbon that had been stored in their trees and soil is ejected into the atmosphere again.

The waterways of Tongass National Forest produce a huge number of pink, sockeye, coho and king salmon that help sustain local fishing communities. In fact, one-quarter of the entire West Coast's annual commercial salmon harvest comes from the Tongass, earning it the unofficial designation "America's Salmon Forest." Additionally, the cycle of salmon traveling from the sea back to freshwater streams and rivers to spawn super-charges the forest ecosystem.

The Tlingit nation has continuously inhabited Southeast Alaska for thousands of years, efficiently subsisting on the natural bounty offered by the Tongass and other wildlands. Hundreds of years ago, they were joined by the Haida and Tsimshian nations, which similarly live off the land. A renewed effort to log and develop in the Tongass, where tens of thousands of Indigenous Alaskans still live, threatens a place that some in these communities consider their ancestral homeland. Tongass National Forest helps ensure clean drinking water. Forests constitute a water treatment network that catches rainfall, regulates storm runoff and pulls pollution from the soil rather than allowing it to make it back to waterways.

last and not least the Tongass National Forest supports the economy and that's exactly the sustainable economy that we are looking to bolster to survive climate change.

Protecting our pristine forest is protecting ourself and future generations. DO the right thing.

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