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First name: Stacy

Last name: Birk

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I disagree with the proposed rule to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule.

I am a pleasure boater who spent a month and a half in Southeast Alaska in 2017. I contributed to the Alaskan economy by buying boat fuel, eating at restaurants, buying groceries and fresh fish, staying at marinas, and visiting natural areas, museums, and historical sites. My partner and I spent more than four thousand dollars during our visit.

The proposed rule would increase logging in the Tongass National Forest. This would diminish the beauty and efficacy of the forest ecosystem. Old-growth areas are especially valuable, harboring some plant and animal species that are seldom found elsewhere. Pleasure boaters spend money in Southeast Alaska, which supports the local economy. The forest - rising up slopes from the stunning waterways - adds to the glory of cruising in Southeast Alaska. It also enhances habitat for humpback whales, killer whales, seals, bald eagles, and salmon, the iconic species that boaters want to see in these waters. With increased logging, boaters will make decreased voyages to Alaska. A diminished forest environment will lead to fewer private boaters making the long journey from the Lower 48.

Please do not exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Rule. Think long term, not short term: old-growth forests, once logged, are gone forever.

Thank you.

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