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Comments: The current status of the Tongass National Forest must be maintained, i.e. it must continue to be protected under the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule. As such it will thrive as one of the few remaining large forests in the U.S. These natural areas of old and new growth trees contribute not only to humankind sensibilities of wonder and beauty, but also very practically to the continuance of life both human and otherwise on Earth. The latter contribution today is being made more plain as the science of climate change reveals that human activity has had, and is continuing to have, deleterious effects. While the imagination of humankind is being tested to produce solutions to halt such effects, and ultimately more importantly, humans' will to put such solutions to work, forests such as the Tongass, other Alaskan forests, and other forests worldwide are serving as proven absorbers of the man-made carbon dioxide gas that threatens to warm our planet to a lifeless orb.

As mankind's imagination and will are put to the test we must depend on the natural carbon sinks of the world to help to keep global warming at bay. Forests are not only a sequester of carbon, but they, along with other plant life are vital suppliers of the oxygen in our atmosphere that keeps us alive. Total or partial revocation of the Roadless Area Conservation Rule would enable those who only see our forests as tools for economic gain, rather than as vital assets for life as we know it.

For the reasons declared above I submit again that the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule must stand.

[Position]

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