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Comments: As a high school student that has taken Environmental Science and am currently taking U.S. Government, I am highly opposed to the exemption of the Tongass National Forest from the Roadless Rule as it would have consequences beyond those seen on the surface. Although their would be small gains in the logging industry and an increase in jobs, this exemption would also affect those in the natural ecosystem. Clear cutting the forest would cause the soil to loosen and run off into nearby water sources. This leads to a process known as eutrophication, where the water sources are overfilled with nutrients, depriving the oxygen from the organisms in the water and causing an overgrowth of algae. When the fish die, not only does the fishing industry suffer, the whole food net suffers and organisms that rely on fish to survive also die out. In addition to this, trees are a natural buffer against natural disasters. Floods will be more severe and temperatures will rise without the shade and protection that the trees in the forest provide. Trees also absorb CO_2 which really helps in our current battle against climate change. There are so many environmental trade offs that it simply does not make sense to exempt the Tongass National Forest for some small economic gains.

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