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Comments: I write as a concerned citizen to request that the Tongass not be made exempt from the Roadless Rule. As an American and Pacific Northwest local, I personally will be negatively impacted by deforestation, pollution associated with mining, and loss of wildlife habitat that this exemption would encourage. The impacts of reducing the power of this forest to sequester carbon associated with global climate change is an unacceptable risk that will impact all Americans and ultimately global citizens as well. The existing protections should be kept in place and no further access to the forest should be established or made possible through reduced environmental protections. The Tongass is America's largest National Forest and therefore is a major carbon sequester which serves to combat the effects of climate change. Keeping it free from roads further prevents fractured habitat. Study after study has shown that wildlife are much more successful in forests which are continuous and thus not interrupted by patches of deforestation, mines, or roads. The projects which the Roadless Rule is preventing should be prevented in order to ensure the Tongass continues to provide habitat and serve as a carbon sequester. Opening roads would allow greater access for logging which would reduce habitat, reduce the number of trees providing clean air, and reduce the carbon sequestering power of the forest. Additionally, mining operations would put the land at risk of erosion, cause sound pollution, and expose water ways to potential chemical and material pollution which has the potential to harm both human water quality and habitat for increasingly rare fish and the large mammals that depend on them such as bears, birds and ungulates. In response to those that say limited roads are limiting potential sustainable power initiatives such as geothermal projects, I maintain that the potential damage to wildlife, water, land and air quality are too great to justify even "clean" power operations such as solar, wind and geothermal and that these projects should be established in other areas which have already been disturbed. Regarding concerns about economic growth for Alaska, the best path forward is to reduce dependence on unsustainable industries such as forestry and mining and adapt to the changing climate by establishing sustainable alternative industries. Alaska's current issues stem in great part from the years of excessive consumption of raw resources rather and consuming further resources by invading this wilderness will serve to exacerbate these issues, not resolve them. The best management practice for a pristine wilderness like the Tongass is to completely protect it as completely as possible from industry and public access.

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