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First name: Carol

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To the U.S. Forest Service:

I am writing to ask that you reconsider your unwise decision to exempt the Tongass National Forest from the current Roadless Rule, as part of Alaska Roadless Rulemaking. Instead, I ask that you choose the No-Action Alternative and keep Roadless Rule protection intact for the Tongass.

The proposed decision to remove protections is shockingly short-sighted and deeply problematic in several key ways: 1.) it places private, short-term profits of logging companies above public long-term interest of preventing the worst effects of climate change and providing stable, healthy habitat for wildlife; it undermines the Roadless Rule, which has massive public support and could destroy national forests in other parts of our beautiful country; it lays open nearly 10 million acres of the world's largest temperate rainforest-an irreplaceable treasure-to destruction.

The Tongass is a key carbon sequestration site, which means it is a prime line of defense against climate change. This old-growth forest holds about 8 percent of the carbon sequestered by all our national forests.

The Tongass protects wildlife, such as salmon, grizzly bears, bald eagles and so much more. These species are important to a healthy environment; to native peoples; to visitors who come to experience one of the last wild places in our country; and to local economies dependent on tourism. Logging in this pristine forest would pollute streams with tons of sediment, remove trees that help regulate water temperature, and so contribute to the decimation of Alaskan salmon populations. It would also destroy an exquisite place-an irreplaceable part of our national heritage.

Undermining the Roadless Rule means that similar protections could be lifted in other national forests across the country. As a biologist and a photographer, I have visited scores of U.S. national forests. I hike, drive, photograph, and view wildlife in these forests, which are places of great beauty and spiritual renewal. I live at the edge of the San Bernardino National Forest, which is heavily visited by people streaming in from the nearby Los Angeles metropolitan area. Healthy national forests give the American people a chance to explore the great outdoors that is part of what makes America great. Clearcuts destroy these forests for the benefit of a very few.

Our public lands were set aside for our wise stewardship and for the future, as well as for the present. If past land managers had made decisions such as the one proposed for the Tongass, we would have lost some of our key national treasures forever. Don't let this happen on your watch with the Tongass. Please protect this exquisite national forest for all Americans and for our future. Choose the No Action Alternative and keep the Roadless Rule

and the Tongass intact. Thank you.

Best regards,

Carol Blaney

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