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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Sarah O'Leary and I live in Johnson City, Tennessee. I lived in Southeast Alaska for a year and a half. I primarily depended on the forest for nourishment: all of the meat and fish I ate came from the forest. During my time there, I was involved in the community in a variety of ways, which allowed me to see how many other people depend on the forest for their food, to support their families, and to practice their culture. I worked at a HeadStart preschool, where many of the students are at-risk and come from low-income families. Many of the students families' fish, hunt, and gather food to be able to live in Sitka. Though I no longer live in Sitka, I care very much about the futures of the students I worked with, and what happens to the Tongass National Forest will directly impact them. I am writing a comment on the Alaska Roadless Rule DEIS because I am concerned with how the Rule and the proposed full exemption will impact the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, subsistence harvesting, fishing, and hunting.

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. The rule is working fine as it is by balancing the conservation of our fish and wildlife habitat with important development projects.. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars keeping public lands wild for future generations. A full exemption does not protect these values, nor does it effectively balance economic development and conservation of roadless area characteristics. A full exemption from the Roadless Rule and increased logging and roadbuilding will negatively impact the Tongass and what I and many others use and depend on the forest to provide for us.

The Roadless areas on the Tongass that are especially important to me are those on or around all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass. I want the roadless areas in these locations to stay in roadless status in any alternative selected by the Forest Service, and be managed to provide for the uses and activities I listed above. It is important to me that the T77 and the TNC conservation priority areas retain their roadless protections.

I do not support the Forest Services preferred alternative of a full exemption. A full exemption is not in the interests of Southeast Alaskans who live in and use the Tongass National Forest, because It has been made clear by Southeast Alaskans from many backgrounds that a full exemption from the Roadless Rule is not supported. Making the Tongass exempt will reverse the efforts and innovation to develop a sustainable economy made by those who live and work in Southeast Alaska.. The State of Alaska says that a full exemption is needed for rural economic development opportunities. However, a full exemption would not help create more rural economic development opportunities, it would instead harm our existing rural economies that are based on the visitor industry and commercial fishing industry.

It would further harm rural economic opportunities because pursuing the same outdated economic model of old growth clearcut harvesting for export stifles innovation and possibility in other sectors, such as mariculture, sustainable young growth harvest, and rural agriculture. If the Forest Service wants to support rural economic

development, they should invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure transition to second growth logging.

I urge the Forest Service to prioritize the voices of Southeast Alaskans over those of our political representation and corporate interests. Choosing a full exemption will not create a long lasting, durable solution for roadless areas on the Tongass. It will only increase the legal challenges, uncertainty for businesses, and conflict on the Tongass going forward.

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