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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear USDA,

Please do NOT "exempt the Tongass National Forest from the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which prohibits tree harvest and road construction." This exemption will destroy our public heritage in favoring lining the pockets of the elite 1%. I understand (quotes from the federalregister.gov) that "The proposed rule is a deregulatory action" intended to stop "internal compliance reviews" which would "impact businesses" and "reduce attractiveness to investors." Why is the USDA considering removing compliance reviews in favor of Big Business 1%'s desire for speed & profit, when what is at stake is something irreplaceable?

The Tongass Forest is one of the worlds best climate defenses. The old trees store nearly 10-12 percent of all carbon consumed by Americas National Forests. Climate change is devastating coastal communities in the US particularly hard, and we need the defense of the world's largest intact temperate rainforest, "America's Amazon."

Protect the Environment, Respect the Culture: These lands are home to pacific salmon, iconic bald eagles, southern resident orcas, and even a 1000-year-old tree! It also contains the traditional homelands of the Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Peoples.

Consider Environmental Costs: "Economic effects of the proposed rule are estimated to be less than \$100 million per year" according to your statement on federalregister.gov. But is the price tag for the release of all that excess carbon? The increasingly warm, mild winters in Alaska and terrible fires ripping through the state? What is the price tag for salmon runs destroyed? Scientific research tells us that the forests are the lungs of the planet.

We have a rare and precious gift in the Tongass National Forest. Do not exempt Big Business from oversight. The people already spoke through Congress when we said "yes" to the Roadless Rule Act. Listen to the people!

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