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First name: Pat
Last name: Kehoe
Organization:
Title:
Comments: My name is Pat Kehoe and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I am a 39 year resident of Sitka in SE Alaska, and have fished commercially and for subsistence for 38 years. I am also an artist painting local nature scenes, and depend on the tourist trade for sale of my products. Fishing for salmon we are acutely aware of the value of old growth and mature forests for the health of our salmon, protecting salmon streams from road building related damage is essential, keeping the temperature of our streams down is critical and the interplay between the ocean and the forest is vital for the health and prosperity of our community. We value the Tongass for hunting, subsistence fishing, foraging and tourism. 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 my fishing, hunting, subsistence harvesting, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, practicing my culture, the status of the Tongass as a national and global treasure, the forest's ability to sequester carbon and mitigate climate change impacts, the conservation of resources for future generations .

Out of the alternatives described in the AKRR DEIS I support alternative 1: no action. It protects important fish and wildlife habitat from clearcutting and roadbuilding. I depend on roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest for economic livelihood, healthy fish habitat, deer habitat and subsistence hunting, foraging and gathering wild foods, practicing my culture, recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, viewing wildlife, keeping public lands wild for future generations, fiscal responsibility and saving taxpayer dollars . 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 Baranof Island, Chichagof Island, Admiralty Island, Kuiu Island, Wrangell and Etolin Islands, Prince of Wales Island, Kupreanof Island, all of the inventoried roadless areas on the Tongass Yakutat forelands. 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 We have been fighting for this essential protection for our forests and our salmon for the entire 39 years that I have lived in SE Alaska. The benefit from preserving the Tongass only grows greater as time passes. The economic value of the current system and protection of the Tongass far out weighs the value of the timber. Tourism and fishing are valuable industries that require a robust Tongass ecosystem.. 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 devote resources to support our fishing and visitor industries invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure.

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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