

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 11/14/2019 9:00:00 AM

First name: Ellen

Last name: Frankenstein

Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Ellen Frankenstein and I live in Sitka, Alaska. I started working in Sitka almost 30 years ago and five years later I moved here full time. Im married to a troller, who depends on an intact ecosystem to fish. I walk in the Tongass if not daily, weekly. I pick berries there. We hunt too. My friends and neighbors, Tlingit and Haida, have lived here since time immemorial. Not long after I moved here I began to work with students in the village of Kake, learning two things: a deep love for place, a love of sharing and for depending on the forest and the ocean for food and a deep pain for the industrial logging that was finishing up then. The logging had provided temporary jobs, but the sense of loss and damage, was deep and it resonated. 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 hunting, fishing, foraging for wild foods, the peace and solitude I find in nature, recreating, 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 shows the Forest Service is responding to the needs and voices of Southeast Alaskan communities. 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, 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, Kupreanof Island, 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 With the roadless rule intact, we protect our crown jewel for the next generations. We also get to keep using it for subsistence, for recreation, for commercial fishing and tourism. Its not being kept from economic use, were just not reverting to the potential for more industrial logging and resource extraction on a level that damages what we leave for the future. We need the forest to help with the climate crisis and it discounts the voices of Southeast Alaskans.. 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 transition to second growth logging invest in creating and maintaining recreation infrastructure improve and streamline existing permitting processes for important community projects rather than rehashing old conflicts.

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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