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Organization:

Title:

Comments: My name is Angela Hessenius and I live in Durham, Alaska. I lived in Sitka for a year as an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer serving with the Sitka Tribe of Alaska's Resource Protection Department. While I was there, I absolutely fell in love with the lands and waters and the communities of Southeast Alaska, especially my home base of Sitka. I've lived many places, but nowhere else compares to the closeness and access of wild nature literally outside your doorstep as in Southeast Alaska. The temperate rainforest, mountains, and oceans are simply some of the most impressive ecosystems on the planet, and I want them to exist into the future as I consider moving back to this region once I complete my graduate studies, at the very least bringing more loved ones to visit this place that means so much to me. 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 subsistence harvesting, 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 recreating and enjoying nature, carbon sequestration and local climate change mitigation, 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, 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 I have been in many public meetings and had many discussions with the people who live and work on the Tongass National Forest. The overwhelming consensus, including based on the public comments received during the scoping period, clearly and unambiguously show that the majority of citizens do not want an exemption from the roadless rule and support a no action alternative. I believe that if the US Forest Service ignores this robust demonstration of public opinion and the economic needs of most community members in Southeast Alaska and instead cater to the select few who would benefit from this exemption, then that to me signifies a reprehensible breach of the democratic principles in which our government should be responsive when people participate in the political process and work hard to make their voices heard.. 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.

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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